FIRST THINGS

The Devil's Chaplain Confounded

Stephen M. Barr

Christ and Critical Theory Paul J. Griffiths

Capital Punishment: The Case for Justice J. Budziszewski

Ethics & Life's Ending An Exchange

Daniel J. Mahoney *on Solzhenitsyn's Western critics*
Robert H. Bork *on the marriage amendment*
Paul Marshall *on the future of Islam*

BOOKS : *Joseph Bottum • Paul O. Carrese*
R. R. Reno • Maureen L. Condic • Michael J. Behe

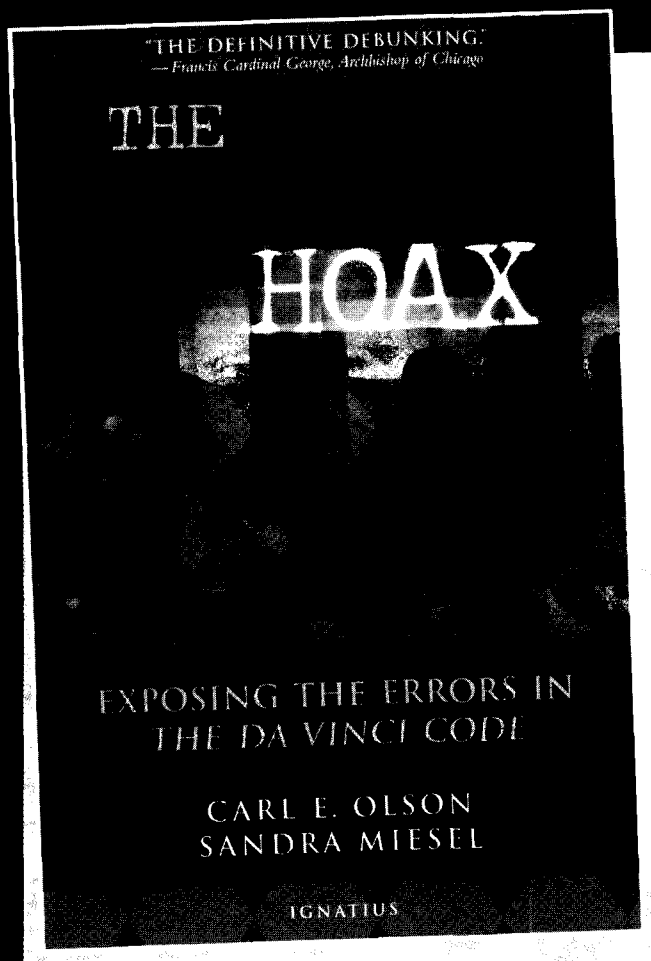
THE PUBLIC SQUARE
Richard John Neuhaus

IN THIS ISSUE: *Communion* & Communio

August/September 2004 • Number 145 • $4.25/$5.25 Canada

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

— CARDINAL FRANCIS GEORGE, ARCHBISHOP OF CHICAGO



UNCOVER the HOAX

THE DA VINCI HOAX

Exposing the Errors in *The Da Vinci Code*

Carl E. Olson & Sandra Miesel

Make sure that your family and friends aren't taken in by the Da Vinci hoax. Best-selling author **Dan Brown** says that his book, ***The Da Vinci Code,*** has all the answers to Christianity and the truth about Jesus.

But **Carl Olson** and **Sandra Miesel** aren't buying it. In this exposé of sloppy research, misleading evidence, and outright fabrication in Dan Brown's book, you'll learn the REAL truth about Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Leonardo da Vinci and more.

If you, or loved ones, have questions about what's real and what's phony, turn to ***The Da Vinci Hoax.*** The next time someone asks you about *The Da Vinci Code,* make sure you have an answer.

ISBN 1-58617-034-1, 375 pp, Sewn Softcover, $15.95

Praise for *The Da Vinci Hoax:*

"*The Da Vinci Hoax* is loaded with detail and corroborates many observations I also made."
—Darrell L. Bock, Ph.D.,
Author, *Breaking the Da Vinci Code*

"Finally! Someone has taken the trouble to counter the absurdities of *The Da Vinci Code*. And unlike the original *Code*, *The Da Vinci Hoax* is a delight to read."
—Philip Jenkins,
Distinguished Professor of History and Religious Studies, Pennsylvania State University

"This is a fascinating read and very good medicine!"
—Michael O'Brien,
Author, *Father Elijah: An Apocalypse*

"I've painfully watched as some fall victim to *The Da Vinci Code* disease. I'll enjoy having this clearly-written antidote to prescribe."
—Marvin Olasky,
Editor-in-chief, *World* Magazine

"Olson and Miesel have done a superb and meticulous job of dissecting the fraud which is *The Da Vinci Code*."
—James Hitchcock,
Professor of History, St. Louis University

Want to learn more about *The Da Vinci Hoax?*
Go to www.davincihoax.com

ALSO FROM CARL OLSON

WILL CATHOLICS BE "LEFT BEHIND"?
A Catholic Critique of the Rapture
In respone to the best-selling *Left Behind* series, Carl Olson's powerful book is a thorough, Catholic critique of the popular Fundamentalist belief in the "Rapture".
395 pp, Sewn Softcover, $15.95

ignatius press

1-800-651-1531 • WWW.IGNATIUS.COM
P.O. BOX 1339, FT CO[illegible]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIRST THINGS

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2004 • Number 145

Correspondence

2 War and statecraft reconsidered; another skirmish in the Pius wars; the good of philosophy; signs of life in Europe; Canada's secular wedge; faithful intolerance; the rhetoric of prayer; Paul Ramsey's style

Opinion

Daniel J. Mahoney 14 Traducing Solzhenitsyn
Robert H. Bork 17 The Necessary Amendment
Paul Marshall 21 Islamic Counter-Reformation

Articles

Stephen M. Barr 25 The Devil's Chaplain Confounded
Robert D. Orr 31 Ethics & Life's Ending: An Exchange
Gilbert Meilaender
J. Budziszewski 39 Capital Punishment: The Case for Justice
Paul J. Griffiths 46 Christ and Critical Theory

Books

Joseph Bottum 56 A Family of His Own by Charles F. Duffy
Paul O. Carrese 59 Restoring the Lost Constitution by Randy E. Barnett
R. R. Reno 63 Brahmin Prophet by Gillis J. Harp
Maureen L. Condic 69 Whose View of Life? by Jane Maienschein
Michael J. Behe 75 Who Rules in Science? by James Robert Brown
80 Briefly Noted

The Public Square

Richard John Neuhaus 86 Communion & *Communio, etc.*

Poetry

Sally Thomas (30), *Henri Ghéon translated by Elenor Loarie Schoen* (38), *Wiley Clements* (45)

First Things (ISSN #1047-5141) is published monthly (except for combined issues June/July and August/September) for $34 per year ($14.97 for students) by the Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: send address changes to First Things, P.O. Box 401, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. **Editorial Offices:** The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. **Editorial Phone:** (212) 627-1985. **Email:** ft@firstthings.com. **Website:** http://www.firstthings.com. **Advertising Offices:** 129 Phelps Avenue, Suite 312, Rockford, IL 61108. **Advertising Phone:** (815) 398-8569. **Email:** firstthingsadsales@pma-inc.net. **Subscription Department:** P.O. Box 401, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. **Subscription Phone:** 1-877-905-9920. **Email:** frth@kable.com. Unsolicited material cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient return postage. Newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., One Media Way, 12406 Rt. 250, Milan, OH 44846. Copyright © 2004 by the Institute on Religion and Public Life. All rights reserved. Produced in the USA.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIRST THINGS

FIRST THINGS is published by Religion and Public Life, an interreligious, nonpartisan research and education institute whose purpose is to advance a religiously informed public philosophy for the ordering of society.

Editor-in-Chief: *Richard John Neuhaus*
Editor: *Damon Linker*
Associate Editor: *J. A. Gray*
Managing Editor: *Matthew Boudway*
Editorial Assistant: *Vincent Druding*
Poetry Editor: *Joseph Bottum*
Publisher: *Institute on Religion and Public Life*
Publishing Service:
Publishing Management Associates

EDITORIAL BOARD

Midge Decter
Timothy George
Mary Ann Glendon
Wilfred M. McClay
David Novak
Michael Novak
George Weigel

EDITORIAL
ADVISORY BOARD

Hadley Arkes
Stephen M. Barr
James Burtchaell
David Dalin
Thomas Derr
Jean Bethke Elshtain
Elizabeth Fox-Genovese
Suzanne Garment
Robert George
Russell Hittinger
Leonid Kishkovsky
Glenn Loury
George Marsden
Robert Louis Wilken

CORRESPONDENCE

War and Statecraft Reconsidered

In "War and Statecraft: An Exchange" (March), George Weigel is right to distinguish "rigorously" between *bellum* in its traditional sense of public war and *duellum* in its equally traditional sense of private war (piracy, brigandage, terroristic raids, most forms of partisan insurgency). Yet it seems to me that in the post–September 11 situation it is difficult to distinguish between the two in some part because the two senses of conflict are mixed.

Whatever the connection between the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the agendas of certain states, these attacks are execrable instances of partisan or private warfare. Indeed, their purpose is to initiate a worldwide *duellum*, a global duel. Consequently, it is incumbent upon just war theory to revisit the question of *duellum*.

Giambattista Vico, in the first edition of the *New Science* (1725), describes in a compelling way how, despite the ancient Romans' ambiguous usage, the term *duellum* nonetheless became associated with "barbarism" in the narrow sense of contempt for public law: "The first outlines of war as such therefore lay in these wars, which were private, with the result that, up to Plautus' time [in the late first century], the Latins called public wars *duella*. And when the barbaric times returned, the first form of war spread anew from Scandinavia throughout all of Europe."

But why did the *duellum* "spread from the nations of the north to the whole of Europe"? Vico's answer should not be waved away: "Because civil purges under the judgment of God were deemed just."

Mr. Weigel and Vico, then, both endorse a sharp distinction between *bellum* and *duellum*, but Vico makes an additional sociological point. The motive of partisan warfare, Vico claims, is a purportedly divine warrant for purging civil power. In keeping with Vico's theory of divine warrant, did not ancient Zealotry, we can ask, pit itself against the civil power of Rome? Did not the Leninist *partinost* pit itself against the international community composed of civil powers? Has not modern Muslim extremism pitted itself against any civil power that is not a mere instrument of the *umma*? And has not the West's military-industrial complex pitted itself against any civil power that does not privilege the "divine right" of capital?

As Mr. Weigel notes, the peace which the civil power is committed to defending is the peace of right order. Vico's concurring view is that *duella* will continue to disrupt this peace so long as "the law of conscience that the gospel commands" is not acknowledged.

John F. Maguire
Natural Law Jurisprudence Center
Berkeley, California

Leaving to the side for one moment several of George Weigel's more questionable assertions concerning the specifics of the war in Iraq, his account of just war doctrine within a "theory of statecraft" should occasion some comment even from those who supported the war on grounds of self-defense. Mr. Weigel's claim that his analysis [is] fully "Thomistic" calls for careful consideration, especially in light of his failure to distinguish properly between the "directive" and "executive" aspects of political prudence. Doubtless this seemingly technical observation will inspire derision among some. However, if our aim is to discover whether St. Thomas would have counte-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nanced a preventative war like the one we have just witnessed, a little strict observation of the Angelic Doctor would seem to be in order.

Mr. Weigel is quite right to question Dr. Williams' overly pacific account of the "presumption against war." Basing such an argument on a "presumption against violence" is clearly difficult to reconcile with the Thomistic and Augustinian analyses, which emphasize the licitness of such coercion by duly constituted authority, as Mr. Weigel observes. Nevertheless, in distinguishing a "presumption against war" from a "presumption against violence," one seems inevitably drawn to the conclusion that the former phrase has more weight than Mr. Weigel assigns it. And not the least reason for this conclusion is Pope John Paul II's recent remarks on war and peace. For the phrase is a useful emblem of the concept of war as a "last resort"—that war is not simply one among many options available to "statecraft," but as the Holy Father emphasized in the run-up to war in Iraq, "war cannot be decided upon, even when it is a matter of ensuring the common good, except as the *very last option*."

As might be expected, this notion of war as the last option comports very well with the characterization of the last resort criterion in *Gaudium et Spes* and the Catechism of the Catholic Church (§ 2309). What is more surprising, however, is that the Catechism's formulation of war as a last resort also fits equally well with the 1913 Catholic Encyclopedia's analysis of the issue: "A clear title is limited to the condition that war is necessary as a *last* appeal." The Encyclopedia's emphasis here is signal, because it militates against the argument that the last resort criterion, strictly understood, is a new analysis.

The Encyclopedia's analysis is indisputably a Thomistic analysis, specifically because it proceeds from St. Thomas' injunction in the *Summa Theologiae* that just war must aim at peace and cannot be "sought" as a pretext for war (II-II.40.1, reply to the third objection). Indeed, on page 41 of Mr. Weigel's own 1987 book *Tranquillitas Ordinis* he seems to acknowledge this, arguing that the "last" in "last resort" must mean "last." St. Thomas' further insistence that even a war fought for a just cause can be rendered unjust by illicit motives (revenge, a lust for domination) (II.II.40.1) only supports the arguments from the Vatican, the Catechism, and the Catholic Encyclopedia that the "primary title" to war is a defense against aggression (extant or imminent) and the redress of wrongs. The analogy St. Thomas uses to elaborate this dynamic is particularly revealing: the public authority is empowered to defend the "commonweal" by armed force just as it is empowered to use capital punishment to defend the same against internal threats. The punitive (rather than immediately defensive) title to war, consequent to an actual injury, would seem to be the only positive (not immediately defensive) title to war, and thus the only one even remotely corresponding to the justification of advancing the good. And in this regard it is interesting to note that the only examples of positive action given by St. Thomas are those analogous to the state's coercive power to "rescue the poor."

One wonders how much latitude Mr. Weigel would be comfortable giving to the coercive power of the public authority in wielding the sword to rescue the poor. This is the paradoxical element in Mr. Weigel's remarks on the subject of war: while he very strictly circumscribes the public authority's role in coercing economic activity toward the end of promoting the common good, he seems to envision more latitude for that authority with regard to advancing the international common good.

This is to be understood in opposition to the idea, admirably criticized above by the Holy Father, of including war among the discretionary tools of statecraft. Clearly the means of war are at the disposal of public authorities to defend the security of a nation. But it should also be clear that in pursuit of the international common good, war is not numbered among the tools available to particular public authorities—particularly not without a rigorous clarification of wherein that international common good might lie.

To place ourselves with St. Thomas we have to defer to the Holy Father when he describes war not as an option but as a failure of statecraft.

Albert Gunn
Alexandria, Virginia

George Weigel is certainly right that, with the appointment of Rowan Williams to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, a man of abundant theological intelligence now resides at Lambeth Palace.

Yet, while I freely admit to moments when I wish every Catholic bishop in the world were as theologically literate as the current Archbishop of Canterbury, his position on war and statecraft strikes me as inadequate. The Archbishop jocularly refers to himself as a "hairy lefty" and seems to regard himself as a voice of prophetic opposition to the very government that appointed him (the Erastian irony of that should certainly give him pause).

Without getting into the specifics of his debate with Mr. Weigel, I must wonder why Dr. Williams' prophetic voice is never heard speaking out against the foul politics of the left, abortion excepted. Given his *bona fides* in the world of hirsute leftism, and given that the Anglican Primate now presides over a communion known more in recent years—at least in the world of journalism and public relations—for its women at the altar and boyfriends in the vicarage than for its doctrinal ortho-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

doxy, one feels certain that his voice would at least be heard (if not heeded) in segments of public opinion where Roman Catholics and Evangelicals could never hope to gain a hearing.

So I am left to ask a whole series of questions about Dr. Williams' brand of prophetic politics: Why no condemnation from him of the former Labour MP George Galloway, who was filmed visiting Saddam Hussein in Baghdad before the war praising Hussein's "indefatigability"? Why no condemnation of the Cambridge classicist Mary Beard, who said that the United States "had it coming" when planes slammed into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon? Why no condemnation of the human rights records of North Korea and Saudi Arabia? Or of the attempts of certain Muslim parties to impose Islamic law in Nigeria, Sudan, Pakistan, and Indonesia? Why no condemnation of the failure of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva to censure abuses in Cuba, Burma, China, Iran, Syria, and Vietnam? It is not as if we live in a world where a prophetic voice would not be welcome. But selective prophecy is merely political posturing, not a genuinely religious indignation.

Edward T. Oakes, S.J.
University of St. Mary of the Lake
Mundelein Seminary
Mundelein, Illinois

I agree with George Weigel about one thing: "a formidable theological intelligence is now resident at Lambeth Palace." Rowan Williams was exactly right in pointing to Aquinas' discussion of violence, as the passage takes us (Mr. Weigel's objection notwithstanding) to the heart of the matter. It is hard to believe that a theologian so bent on providing justification for preemptive armed conflict would find a theological account of violence tangential to the question of war.

Mr. Weigel needs to deal with Dr. Williams' reading of Thomas on violence, and he needs to deal more fundamentally with what has rightly been described by John Milbank as Augustine's "ontology of peace." Unless one is to move in a Manichean direction, one must think of every kind of violence as parasitic on the disordering effects of sin. Nonviolent order is exegetically, chronologically, and ontologically prior to every other kind of order for Christians. There is indeed disagreement about the justifiability of violence and war under the conditions of sin, but there can be no classical Christian theology that abandons the priority of nonviolent order. That is what "the presumption against violence" or "the presumption against war" is all about.

Moreover, Oliver O'Donovan has rightly insisted that the just war tradition is "a limiting doctrine." It is about restraining the sinful tendency of individuals and civil authorities to escalate acts of violence. Catchphrases like "cycles of violence" or "violence begetting violence" are not the property of secular, antiwar humanism; they are the fruits of biblical realism regarding the predictable trajectory of vengeful thinking and acting. The "presumption against violence" is a useful way of spelling out the "limiting" nature of the doctrine.

Lastly, in rejecting Dr. Williams' defense of the "political rationality" of the terrorists, Mr. Weigel appeals to an alleged nihilism in the camp of the terrorists. While I doubt this is an accurate description, surely Weigel is not conceding the truth of nihilism! Surely he would want to say about the terrorists what Augustine said about even the most wretched creatures in *The City of God*: "they have amongst them some tranquility of order, and therefore some peace." How do we know this? On the basis of the Christian conviction that "no creature's perversion is so contrary to nature as to destroy the very last vestiges of its nature." We hear in passages like these Augustine's resounding rejection of Manichean dualism. Would that we could hear the same in the political thinking of George Weigel.

Charlie Collier
Southern Pines, North Carolina

As a Christian of conservative bent who vehemently opposed the manner in which the Bush administration took the United States to war in Iraq, I read the exchange between Rowan Williams and George Weigel with great interest. I found it a model for the kind of civil, theologically informed, and intelligent discourse so badly needed in the Church and the world today.

A few comments, though, seem to be in order. Mr. Weigel makes a great point about the starting place for just war theory being the preservation of right order rather than a "presumption against violence." Fair enough. But do not both right order and just war theory have at their root the idea that violence must be controlled? It was the absence of this recognition, from the Bush administration's first assertions that it needed the approval neither of the UN nor of the U.S. Congress to go to war, that led me to oppose the war.

In order for the state to maintain the ability to use force to preserve right order, it is vital that that force be deployed in a manner that is widely recognized as legitimate. Suppose that a police officer, on hearing that an escaped murderer is hiding out in a house, storms the front door, guns blazing, without first seeking a warrant and while killing the murderer accidentally kills a hostage who turns out to have been in the house as well. While such an officer would not be a murderer, his actions would rightly be condemned as reckless, unaccountable, and not conducive to "right order"—since it would damage the trust necessary between the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

general population and those appointed to protect it. That is why police departments have manuals of police procedure and why such an officer would probably be fired for violating its strictures.

It is not clear how to create similar controls on the international level. This is in many ways the weakness of Dr. Williams' argument. But surely there is some middle ground between the Archbishop's (very Anglican) faith that an institutional solution can be found and the contemptuous rejection of such solutions by the current vice president and secretary of defense. Without some mechanisms to control or at least censure the unjustified use of force, the pacifist impulse to deny it to governments altogether becomes much harder to oppose.

Anand Gnanadesikan
Plainsboro, New Jersey

George Weigel replies:

I am grateful to my respondents for illustrating, in various ways and to various degrees, the vitality of the just war debate within the Christian community today.

John F. Maguire's call for a reexamination of the *bellum-duellum* distinction, in light of new realities like terrorist organizations with international reach and effect, is well taken. At the same time, I fear that his proposal is somewhat marred by conflating the first century Zealots, Lenin's Bolsheviks, al-Qaeda and Hamas, and the Western "military-industrial complex." Leaving aside the interesting question of whether the last actually exists, it's not clear to me what painting with such a broad brush illuminates, Vico notwithstanding.

Albert Gunn will, I trust, recognize that the essay that occasioned Dr. Williams' response (and my subsequent response to that) was not an exercise in Thomistic textual exegesis. Rather, it was an effort to apply the moral logic of classic just war theory to our present circumstances. In part, my aim was to bridge the gap that had emerged over the past two generations between just war thinking and a morally rigorous theory of statecraft; for more on this topic, see my more recent FIRST THINGS essay, "World Order: What Catholics Forgot" (May). This gap is, if I may use the phrase, thoroughly un-Thomistic. Moreover, I believe this gap has something to do with the so-called "presumption against war," an intellectual move that tends to reduce just war thinking to a casuistry of means in which the question of obligatory political ends is rather marginalized.

Mr. Gunn and others of his persuasion might well have a look (again?) at the article that launched the "presumption against war" school: James F. Childress' "Just War Theories: The Bases, Interrelations, Priorities, and Functions of Their Criteria" (*Theological Studies* 39:3 [1978], pp. 427-445). If Mr. Gunn were to inform me that he found much in Professor Childress' article that appeals to a strict-observance Thomist, or indeed to any other kind of Thomist, I should be surprised indeed. Charlie Collier might also have a look (again?) at Professor Childress' article; Childress' argument might help Mr. Collier understand a bit better why I think the "presumption against war," as Childress and his disciples have used it, makes a hash of just war thinking methodologically and substantively, with unfortunate consequences for prudential judgment. (On this point, it should also be of interest to various sorts of Thomists that the "presumption against war" was taught by a Quaker, Childress, to a Catholic, J. Bryan Hehir, who then sold it to Catholic bishops interested in maintaining unity between the pacifist and just war wings of their conference. The relationship of the "presumption against war" analysis to the proportionalist methodology deplored by John Paul II's *Veritatis Splendor* is a related matter worth exploring. But those are issues for another day.)

Anand Gnanadesikan raises the important question of the locus of moral authority in the twenty-first-century world, with specific reference to the question of who may legitimately authorize the use of proportionate and discriminate armed force. Would Mr. Gnanadesikan's interest in a "middle ground" beyond alleged American unilateralism on the one hand, and pious but groundless hopes about the present capacities of the UN system on the other, be satisfied by the device of "coalitions of the willing," I wonder?

Rowan Williams declined to reply to the letters.

Another Skirmish in the Pius Wars

In "The End of the Pius Wars" (April), Joseph Bottum pleads for more vigorous efforts "to correct the slander of Pius XII." While welcoming José Sanchez' book *Pius XII and the Holocaust* as well as my article "The Holocaust: What Was Not Said" (FT November 2003) with its "relatively mild criticism" of Pius XII, Mr. Bottum writes that "there is something willful and maddening in their tone of Olympian detachment." This can never "restore the balance" and achieve "historical accuracy," Mr. Bottum contends. What is needed is "pressure on the other side."

I am no less eager than Mr. Bottum to refute slanders against Pius XII and the Catholic Church. My article stated at the outset that some of the endlessly repeated charges against the Church and Pope Pius XII are "merely exaggerated," while others (especially in books by John Corn-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

well and Daniel Jonah Goldhagen) are "so devoid of historical foundation that they range from the absurd to the outrageous." I also wrote in the article that "many Catholics—priests, religious, laity, and above all Pius XII—helped many Jews, sometimes at the risk of the rescuers' lives." Mr. Bottum's concern to "restore the balance" seems to have prevented him from seeing that my article was not really about Pius XII, indeed that it exonerated him in large measure. I see the problem not so much in Rome as in Germany—with the German bishops.

The central contention of my article was that the Church's anti-Nazism and antiracism were never intended to defend the Jews from their persecutors, but rather to defend the Church. This is why the German bishops never publicly defended the Jews; and why, for pastoral reasons, they tried instead to find a modus vivendi with Hitler's regime. The article also noted that a widespread anti-Judaism and socio-economic and cultural (rather than racial) anti-Semitism made it difficult for both Catholics and Protestants to perceive the growing danger threatening Jews.

Clearly, this outlook clouded the vision also of Cardinal Pacelli and Pius XI. They were children of their time and justly concerned with defending their own flock. This concern encompassed baptized Jews but did not extend to Jews in general. Moreover, some of the Nazis' anti-Jewish measures seemed to some church leaders not wholly unjustified. My article attempted to explain why church leaders acted as they did. That, in my view, is the best defense against the slanders, lies, and outrageous absurdities of critics like Cornwell and Goldhagen.

Trying to "restore the balance" and "achieve historical accuracy" by "putting pressure on the other side" is a political approach, not a historical one—especially when this is done at the expense of truth. It is also counterproductive. Exerting pressure arouses mistrust and provokes fresh attacks from the Church's critics. The only good and effective way to parry such attacks is always to tell the truth without fear, even if this is sometimes painful and may complicate things for a time. Only in this way can we create a climate of trust between Christians and Jews.

My article was chiefly directed against a kind of "apologetic" which, while intending to defend the Church, does so at the expense of historical truth by embellishing or manipulating the facts. Mr. Bottum does exactly that in his article when he tries to show that the Church defended Jews by citing a "document from April 1933, just months after Hitler obtained power, [which] reveals how Pacelli (then Secretary of State) ordered the new German nuncio, Cesare Orsenigo, to protest Nazi actions." This is a vast overstatement. The document was not an "order." There was no question of a "protest." And Pacelli's letter was not a Vatican initiative.

The detailed account of this episode in my article is less dramatic but, I believe, closer to the historical truth:

> On April 4, 1933, Cardinal Pacelli, at the request of "important Israelite personalities," wrote the Papal Nuncio Cesare Orsenigo in Berlin directing him to explore the possibility of a diplomatic intervention against "anti-Semitic excesses" in Germany. Orsenigo answered immediately that any intervention by the Holy See was impossible, since anti-Semitism was now part of the official policy of the German government. The Church could not protest against German laws; that would be rejected as interference in internal politics. . . . This response from the Berlin nuncio, along with the letter of April 10 from Faulhaber to Pacelli, appears to have set the course for the Vatican's future policy. . . . When the Concordat was ratified in September 1933, Pacelli handed the German chargé d'affaires, Hanns Kerrl, a "Promemoria" of the Holy See stating merely that "the Holy See permits itself a word in favor of Catholics who have come to the Church from Judaism." Jews as such were not a topic for discussion.

As Secretary of State, Pacelli obviously gave in to the weaker policy of German bishops like Faulhaber, Gröber, and Bertram. As an example my article cited Cardinal Faulhaber's letter to Pacelli of April 10, 1933, in which he declared that nothing should be done to defend the Jews "because that would transform the attack on the Jews into an attack on the Church." My article also cited Faulhaber's letter only two days previously to the Regensburg priest Alois Wurm, who had pleaded for the bishops to defend the Jews. This was not advisable, Faulhaber wrote, because "the preservation of our schools and Catholic organizations and the question of compulsory sterilization are more important matters for Christianity in our country." Up until 1937 Faulhaber, who was a monarchist and a convinced and outspoken anti-democrat, believed that the real problem was not Hitler and his regime but "extremists" in the Nazi party with their *volkisch* and racist ideology. If these could be neutralized, a modus vivendi with Hitler would be possible. By 1937 at the latest, but probably much earlier, Pacelli saw clearly that this was a grave error and an illusion. He realized that the real problem—and a mortal danger to the Church—was Hitler himself and his regime, which were inextricably linked to Nazi ideology.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Looking at things in this way neither serves one-sided apologetic purposes nor searches for the guilty. Most importantly, it is the only effective and truthful way to "restore the balance" and "correct the slander of Pius XII." Pius was not "Hitler's Pope," nor was he ever a friend of the Nazis or of Hitler. And he was no anti-Semite. He was simply a man who thought as most people did at the time, a man of absolute personal integrity, though with an outlook conditioned by his training as a church diplomat. (On this see the brilliant new biography by Philippe Chenaux, *Pie XII. Diplomate et Pasteur*, 2003). Once we see this clearly we can examine his actions critically without attacking or undermining the authority given by Jesus Christ to the Church, her Magisterium, her pastors, or the pope himself.

(The Rev.) Martin Rhonheimer
Pontifical University
of the Holy Cross
Rome, Italy

Joseph Bottum's article contains, in my respectful view, two rather glaring omissions which will be obvious even to those with only a casual interest in his topic. The first is that the Vatican has not released any documents from its archive generated during World War II. How can Mr. Bottum claim that "the books [on the topic of Pius XII and the Holocaust] have all been written" when the Vatican has refused requests from a panel of eminent historians formed to investigate Pacelli's wartime record? It is all well and good for Mr. Bottum to refer to letters that Pius XII wrote in the 1920s and '30s. But it is his record during the war that is at issue.

Second, Mr. Bottum casts the whole debate as if it were one about whether Pacelli was a Nazi sympathizer or worse. While some do claim this, the majority of people are simply troubled by the fact that during the whole war period Pius XII made not one public statement condemning the mass murder of Jews and others despite the fact that he was well aware that it was taking place and had been urged by Harold Tittmann (to whom Bottum refers) and others to do so. Surely the Pope's obfuscatory 1942 Christmas message, which mentioned neither Jews nor Nazis, was not such a statement. Had Pius done what was asked of him, he would surely have saved hundreds of thousands of lives, since the success the Nazis achieved in murdering most of European Jewry was heavily dependent on the active, willing, enthusiastic, and industrious collaboration of Catholics, which began to wane only after it was clear that Germany would lose the war.

What Pius' critics have trouble with is how the spiritual head of such an important religion could remain silent in the full knowledge that the worst crime in history was unfolding before his eyes. That is the serious complaint against him and the one for which there has never been a satisfactory exculpatory answer, though there have been many inculpatory explanations.

I can conclude only that Mr. Bottum's refusal to deal with these two matters arises from his own partisanship. I also find evidence of this partisanship in what, at least to my ears, was the sarcastic, fed-up tone in which the piece was written—hardly one that inspires confidence that the writer is attempting to be objective.

Murray Teitel
Toronto, Ontario

Joseph Bottum replies:
In my article on the current state of scholarship about Pius XII, I mentioned Martin Rhonheimer only once, quite in passing. But it seems to have chafed him badly, and if he really must charge back out onto the playground to confront the bully who so hurt his feelings, who am I to say him nay? It is the role of giant ruffians like me to fall before doughty diminutives like Rhonheimer, and each of us must play our part in that ancient story.

Not today, however. Today, Rhonheimer gets knocked over a teakettle. This is hardly the place to rehearse the errors and elisions in his original article, or the way it allows its thesis like a steamroller to flatten the facts. But just in the part that Rhonheimer quotes in his letter—about the events of April 1933—the reader can sense the problems in his original essay.

As it happens, April 1933 saw a flurry of exchanges to which Rhonheimer doesn't refer. When Cardinal Pacelli instructed Cesare Orsenigo, papal nuncio to Germany, to intervene against Nazi anti-Semitism, Orsenigo did not dismiss the instruction, as Rhonheimer suggests. Orsenigo said he would consult a German bishop. The result was that on April 10, 1933, three prominent German bishops issued a statement denouncing "the hatred and the dissent" directed against "faithful citizens"—a message everyone understood as a protest against the April 1 boycott against Jewish businesses, which had provoked Jews to petition Pacelli, who then sent his instruction to Orsenigo.

There is no mention of "converts" in the instruction, and the fact that one of the first diplomatic interventions made by the Holy See was against the anti-Semitism directed at all Jews is hardly compatible with Rhonheimer's image of a removed Church concerned only with "Church interests." Pacelli was always associated with the anti-Nazi bishops: Preysing and von Galen in particular, whom, after he became pope, he appointed cardinals in 1946. He wanted to overthrow Hitler, for God's sake, and he took great risks with the anti-Nazi resistance. On April 19, 1933, Pacelli wrote Orsenigo, thanking him for a copy of the statement by the three German bish-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ops and stating that he had informed Pius XI about this intervention in defense of the persecuted.

Rhonheimer insists he is "no less eager" than I am "to refute slanders against Pius XII and the Catholic Church." Is he? I saw no such eagerness either in his original article or in his current letter: brief and ritualistic dismissal of calumny joined with extensive refutation of praise hardly looks like eagerness to me.

But then, I am a mere practitioner of "a political approach, not a historical one," Rhonheimer insists, and thus unworthy of entering these discussions. Probably so. But Rhonheimer's concern to concede everything possible to the denigrators of the Church seems to have prevented him from seeing that my article was about the climate in which every attack on Pius is magnified into hatred. Is it political, not historical, of me to object when a Fort Lauderdale newspaper declares Pius XII was "the main inspirer and prosecutor" of the Vietnam war? Political to complain when he's denounced as a racist? Anti-historical to howl when the *Times* of London names him "a war criminal" or 60 Minutes insists there is "absolutely" no difference between the writings of Pius and the writings of Hitler? Vatican tour guides report that many Americans say, "Oh, that's Hitler's pope," when they come upon the statue of Pius in St. Peter's. There is a time to concede that the denigrators of the Church haven't gotten every single interpretation wrong, but it has to come after the correction of all their errors.

I thank Murray Teitel for his letter, but I think he needs to re-read my article, which ends with a call for the opening of more archives and a new biography of Pius XII. My essay was a description of the current climate, not a defense of the Pope, and it included reference to my own previously published worries about the role of the Church during the war. I don't quite know what Mr. Teitel means by my "sarcastic" tone. There was little I intended as sarcasm in my article (nothing like the opening of my reply above to Martin Rhonheimer). But I will confess to having a "fed-up" tone, because I really am fed up—with Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's book and John Cornwell's book and the endless stream of slander pouring out against Pius XII these days. If Murray Teitel will join me to counter the slander, we can then return to serious analysis of the questions he raises.

The Good of Philosophy

I am grateful to Ralph Hancock for the words of praise with which his review of my book (*Political Philosophy and the God of Abraham*; April) begins and also for those critical observations in it that are genuinely thought-provoking. But I hope that I may be allowed to point out a very grave misunderstanding and misattribution, and to protest the calumny with which the attack on me reaches its crescendo.

Professor Hancock fairly summarizes my thought when he writes, "belief in God and the decision to obey Him must rest on human knowledge of what is good and true, a knowledge acquired, or at least interrogated, by rational reflection." But he follows this with a sentence that attributes to me a grossly illogical non sequitur: "But once this has been conceded, rationalism, with its insistence on the autonomy of the human intellect, has won the day." How in the world is this entailed, and where did I ever commit such an absurdity?

Yet Prof. Hancock insists that "Pangle returns to this theme toward the end of the book, in a chapter entitled 'Abraham at the Peak.'" "On Pangle's account," the reviewer asserts, "biblical faith terminates in the following impasse: . . . either Abraham's deed is completely unintelligible, arbitrary, groundless, and effectively mad—the act of a man who deliberately does what he knows not to be good for him; or it must be explained in terms of rational and egoistic calculation." Here, once again, the position attributed to me is grotesquely absurd: for on what grounds could anyone equate genuinely self-conscious sacrifice or subordination of one's own good with the "completely unintelligible, arbitrary, groundless, and effectively mad"?

Prof. Hancock then goes on to permit himself to speculate for two paragraphs on the "possibility" (for he can of course give absolutely no evidence) that "Pangle does not view philosophy as noble at all—and that he merely employs an exalted rhetoric to attract people, and especially young people" so as to seduce them into the sick view that "the philosopher is merely a hedonist" who "derives his pleasure from voiding the ethical, political, and religious content of life, savoring above all else his ever-renewed awareness of the groundlessness or incoherence underlying his attachment to other human beings." A moment's thought will show that such a caricature could not be a human being and that, in order to be engaged in leading young people toward such a conception of the philosopher, I would have to be deficient in humanity as well as intelligence.

To paint this kind of caricature, to engage in this kind of ad hominem attack—and thus to echo the ignorant and malicious Straussian-baiting that rages in the contemporary media—is sadly unworthy of the Ralph Hancock whose book *Calvin and the Foundations of Modern Politics* I respect and from which I have learned.

Thomas Pangle
University Professor
St. Michael's College
University of Toronto
Ontario

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ralph Hancock replies:
I am happy to grant that certain of my necessarily brief and therefore perhaps somewhat abrupt formulations cannot do complete justice to the carefully wrought twists and turns, the skillful dialectical detours, of Professor Pangle's rich and subtle text. Still, I cannot see how an alert reader can avoid coming to the same conclusion I did about Prof. Pangle's ultimate allegiance with regard to reason and revelation. Given that the author identifies himself at the outset with an "unqualifiedly normative rationalism," which, following John Locke, adopts reason as its "only Star and compass," it is hard to credit his surprise at my conclusion that "rationalism . . . has won the day."

Likewise, in his book Prof. Pangle has powerfully questioned whether obedience understood as self-conscious submission to divine command is "possible, or even conceivable as coherent," and he has remarked more delicately that "Abraham's unequaled deed is infinitely clearer to us than the coherence of the thought that was in his heart." This questioning was prepared, moreover, by a sympathetic account of Spinoza's argument according to which obedience to any other god than reason leaves the "will" to obey God "as groundless and therefore as senseless and unsteady as the will to disobey," "a manifestation of sheer arbitrariness," no more than "tergiversations of mindlessness, or of an uncontrollable imp within us." And yet Prof. Pangle finds "grotesquely absurd" my formulation ("unintelligible, arbitrary, effectively mad") of what he considers to be the alternative to rationalism. If he would prefer, I would be happy to substitute his "mindless . . . uncontrollable imp" for my "effectively mad."

In fact I do not believe that Prof. Pangle's central argument, even in my perhaps brutally compact formulations, is a "grossly illogical non sequitur." I believe it is very powerful, almost compelling. Yet it is, finally, inadequately reflective. Fully to question the rule of reason would require that one go beyond Prof. Pangle's critique of the religious will to obedience—to scrutinize reason's claim to self-sufficient goodness more ruthlessly than Prof. Pangle is willing to do. This would mean going beyond Leo Strauss' bracing and useful but finally limited formulation of the problem in terms of an unbridgeable gulf separating "Jerusalem and Athens." It would mean considering not only what questions Athens raises for Jerusalem, but also in what way philosophy's questioning inevitably depends or draws upon a notion of the good inescapably rooted in prephilosophical intimations. Prof. Pangle, despite rhetorical flourishes in this direction, finally reveals little interest in such a radical questioning of rationalism.

Finally, let us consider in context the passages that provoke Prof. Pangle's charge of "calumny." Having observed that the author finds the notion of "moral responsibility" to be at best highly problematic, I argue that he has subverted the ground of the very sense of elevation upon which his idea of philosophy depends. (Clearly Prof. Pangle does not look to any cosmic teleology to supply this defect.) And so I am indeed left to speculate as to what philosophy's claim to be the best way of life could possibly mean in the absence of any ontological grounding of the distinction between "high" and "low." Prof. Pangle pretends to be shocked by the suggestion that he might be practicing the by-now famous art of esoteric writing, that his numerous edifying rhetorical flourishes might finally be a pretty public packaging for a teaching ultimately addressed, as Strauss wrote, by "the mature philosopher" to "the puppies of his race"—that is, to a few "potential philosophers [who] are to be led step by step from the popular views which are indispensable for all practical and political purposes to the truth which is *merely and purely theoretical*" (my emphasis). My central question to Pangle is the same one I would put to Professor Strauss (whose contributions to political philosophy I hold to be beyond praise): How can this "purely theoretical" truth, in which the good is finally emancipated from the noble and thus purged of all moral as well as cosmological supports or analogies, sustain any sense of elevation?

In my review, I speculated that, in light of this emancipation and purgation of theory, the goodness of philosophy could be understood only in terms of the pleasure that derives from the act of emancipation and purgation. Prof. Pangle twice claims in his letter that this suggestion is a "caricature" of the truth. I note that a caricature is an exaggeration of certain recognizable attributes or qualities. Yet Prof. Pangle fails to explain in what ways my characterization was accurate and in what ways inaccurate. People will have to read Prof. Pangle's book to decide the matter for themselves. I am satisfied to put this question to both author and reader: Once philosophy has emancipated itself from the goodness that informs the lives of non-philosophers, can it avoid degenerating into a way of life defined primarily, if not solely, by the savoring of its own superiority in being able to face, with the rarest courage, the groundlessness of existence?

Leo Strauss' rediscovery of the art of esoteric writing was a singular and still underappreciated achievement. But the transplantation of this subtle art to the arena of modern scholarship tends to focus intellectual efforts too narrowly on exegetical arguments and thus to distract potential philosophers from the inquiry

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Strauss initiated into the political, moral, and religious conditions of philosophy. We would better honor Strauss' legacy through a discussion—even a public discussion—of the good of philosophy.

Signs of Life in Europe

Robert Louis Wilken's experience in Germany—conveyed in "The Church as Culture" (April)—led me to reflect on my own experience in Europe. During my exchange year in Bavaria, my family and I encountered both the moldering bones of Christendom and surprising outbreaks of some sort of renewal.

We were not impressed by most of the worship services we encountered —as intellectual as we fancied ourselves, we found the services all too heady, dry, and uninspired. Our more *heidenisch* friends longed for spiritual community, but just could not find a home in the Church. From what we could tell, this was a problem for the entire European Church.

On a visit to Erlangen, however, our eyes were opened to something new. In a former elementary school on a former U.S. military base, the Bavarian Lutheran Church had established an experimental congregation along contemporary evangelical lines, complete with a praise band, a casually dressed pastor, even a place for kid's play at the back. Just as you'd imagine, the place was full of young European families, the kind that may or may not care if the European Union's constitution speaks of Christianity but who certainly do care that God loves them and who respond to that love. Whether these young Christians can establish a culture that nourishes their faith is a question. It is a challenge I think they, and the bride of Christ, are ready to accept.

(The Rev.) Gregory Yeager
Grafton Lutheran Church
Grafton, North Dakota

Robert Louis Wilken replies:
I was recently in Spain and had similar feelings as I visited gorgeous churches that had the feel of museums. Yet on Ascension Sunday (as it is now called) I attended a solemn Liturgy in Córdoba (in the cathedral built in the midst of the famous Mosque of Córdoba) presided over by the local bishop in a church overflowing with an attentive and responsive congregation and a magnificent organ and choir. And billowing clouds of incense! On the surface Spanish society appears very secular, but in the twentieth century Spain gave birth to one of the most successful reform movements in contemporary Christendom, Opus Dei. My sense is that there is more to be hoped for from such radical and disciplined forms of Christian renewal than from praise bands and casually dressed clergy.

Canada's Secular Wedge

Raymond J. de Souza's "'Thinly Disguised Totalitarianism'" (April) presents a very vivid—and wholly accurate—picture of the maw-like appetite of the secular-humanist state in Canada. One further example of our moral collapse is the eradication of Catholic schools in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

When Newfoundland joined the Dominion in 1949, the Terms of Union included a constitutional protection of denominational public schools, most of which were Catholic. In 1995, the provincial government of former-Premier (now Chief Justice) Clyde Wells held a referendum to support a constitutional change which would preserve some Catholic schools—where numbers warranted—but would eliminate separate Catholic school boards. The referendum passed, and the federal government complied dutifully with Newfoundland's request to make the requisite constitutional change.

It was the first time in Canadian legislative history that the national constitution had been amended to abrogate entrenched rights. But it would not be the last.

I was a Catholic school trustee at the time and recall well that ministers in the Newfoundland government provided copious assurances that this would not be the thin edge of a wedge: there would be no further constitutional changes, and supporters of Catholic schools who felt aggrieved under the new system would be entitled to judicial enforcement of their watered-down rights if their schools were not designated as Catholic.

As it turned out, Catholic parents in three school districts felt that their schools had been designated improperly as nondenominational and took their grievances to court. They won. The response of then-Premier Brian Tobin was to dress up the situation as a "crisis" (even though only a very small number of schools were affected by the legal proceedings) and call a second, snap referendum in 1997 seeking the total abolition of Catholic schools. The referendum passed (which is hardly surprising, since a majority-rule vote will trump minority rights every time) and Catholic schools were eliminated.

Since then, two private Catholic schools have been set up in the province. Oddly enough, those who toed the government line, saying that Catholics who want Catholic schools should pay for them out of their own pockets, now take the view that there should be no Catholic schools at all because they are discriminatory and they remove students from the public system. Needless to say, both schools have been mightily successful, with growing enrollments and numerous academic awards.

Del Atwood
New Glasgow, Nova Scotia

In his article Raymond J. de Souza comments that, although Trinity Western University (TWU) prevailed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the Supreme Court of Canada, lower courts agreed with the College of Teachers. This is incorrect. All three courts that examined the TWU case ruled for TWU and against the College of Teachers. After its initial loss in the British Columbia Supreme Court, the college appealed to the province's Court of Appeal, which also denied its case. The university then sought a final appeal in the Supreme Court of Canada where its arguments failed a final time.

Guy S. Saffold
Executive Vice President
Trinity Western University
Langley, British Columbia

Raymond J. de Souza replies:
Dr. Saffold is right—it was the College of Teachers that appealed the judgments, not Trinity Western University. I apologize for the error. However, it should be noted that while the courts sided with TWU, they did so in the final instance on evidentiary grounds (the College of Teachers had not sufficiently proved its case) rather than on grounds of religious liberty. So TWU's victory is not as comforting as it otherwise should have been. Mr. Atwood is right to note that the question of denominational schools in Newfoundland serves as another example of religious influence being chased out of public life by aggressive secularism. While my piece focused on judicial and regulatory threats to religious liberty, the legislative branch in Canada has not escaped infection by the totalitarian impulse.

Faithful Intolerance

In "St. Benedict After September 11" (April), John M. Owen IV shows us why the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia is not advancing the study of culture. One might expect that as a fellow of such an institute Mr. Owen would have something to say about culture, but unfortunately he does not. Owen criticizes Wendell Berry, Stanley Hauerwas, William Willimon, and Alasdair MacIntyre for their inability to live a dichotomous life. That is, he criticizes them for not being good Americans. "The state," says Mr. Owen, "being the supreme coercive power in any country, is capable in theory of forcing the Church (and other communities) to change their practices or suffer punishment." Mr. Owen goes on to say that because of America's religious tolerance it "not only deserves our loyalty, but also merits our continuing involvement." For Mr. Owen, then, the American government deserves the support of Christians rather than their condemnation because it is responsible to the people and grants them a place in which they can be free to worship—so long as they restrict their practices to the private sphere. MacIntyre's Benedictine ideal is insufficient, says Owen, and must not be taken too far, since it may lead the state to act towards us (the religious) in an inhospitable fashion.

Constantinianism is our model for religious tolerance, but was this the "colossal error" that Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon claim it to have been? Mr. Owen thinks that Hauerwas and Willimon are too radical in thinking so. Prior to Constantine's conversion there were great persecutions against Christians taking place throughout the Roman empire. And with each persecution came newly baptized confessors. The church of a crucified God does not deteriorate in the face of persecution but flourishes—for "it is in dying," says St. Francis of Assisi, "that we gain eternal life." Christianity suffered a loss of identity when it became a "national religion."

A decaying empire with a revolutionary religion that wouldn't die needed to gain the upper hand. What better way to gain support than to turn the tables and declare the revolutionists the head of society? It put an end to the revolt and gave a dying empire a glimpse of hope.

America, by contrast, was to be a new land, a place where citizens were free from the constraints of a national religion, where one's worldly fate would not be tied to whether or how often one participated in the life of the Church. Religious tolerance created a gulf between church and state and forced the Church into submission. Toleration was not for the people; toleration was for the state—for the capitalist market system. Religious tolerance in America ensures not only that Americans have the right to stay home on Sundays but also that the Church tolerates the activities of the state and the surrounding economic structure.

Toleration masks itself as a wonderful gift to all of us who call ourselves Christian. Christianity, however, would be better served if it were the direct target of the state rather than the victim of its deception. Mr. Owen claims that "our love for the Church . . . demands our continuing engagement in, and defense of, the America we have." If we really love the Church, we would wage war on the John M. Owens of our society. The fact is that one simply cannot be a Christian and embrace religious tolerance. To do the latter is to embrace the death of conviction. If we for one moment tolerate American democracy as the highest ideal we cease to be Christian.

Let us cease participating in American nihilism and debunk the John M. Owens in our society. Out of love for the Church, let us reclaim its identity as an intolerant and faithful people.

Billy Daniel
Duke University
Raleigh, North Carolina

John M. Owen IV replies:
One would think from reading Billy Daniel's letter that I am oblivious to the corrosive effects of American

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

culture on Christian faith and practice and that I label as "bad Americans" those who alert us to those effects. In fact, my article makes clear that I concur with many of the critiques found in Hauerwas, Berry, et al.: much of our culture and many of our institutions are sick, and the Church's immunity is low. But I say that faithful American Christians face a dilemma: we are in fact Americans as well as Christians, and because America is seriously threatened by terrorism we must try to defend both country and Church. The trouble is that the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, have lured many conservative Christians back into Cold War-style defenses of the American way of life, particularly individual liberty. I argue that, because we were correct prior to September 11 to criticize such aspects of American culture and to find the St. Benedict option appealing, we should instead base our defense of our country on its continuing toleration of the Church. I argue, further, that safeguarding that same tolerance of religious communities requires our continuing involvement in society and politics—that is, something less than a full Benedictine withdrawal.

Mr. Daniel seems to deny that we face a dilemma. He achieves this denial, first, via a strange silence: he entirely ignores September 11, the event that (I claim) brought our dilemma to the surface by reminding us that we depend on our government for safety. If Mr. Daniel believes we ought to opt out of the war on terrorism, he should say so and defend his position. Second, he argues that toleration is a poisoned chalice. Persecution strengthens the Church. Christians should become intolerant to the point of waging war (whatever that might mean) on people like me.

A full reply to Mr. Daniel's rejection of toleration would require at least another article, but three points should be noted. First, his advice is unclear: Are we to become Anabaptists and leave society alone so as to preserve our own faithfulness? That would be tolerant, which he does not like. So perhaps he means we are to follow St. Augustine and "compel them to come in." But such intolerance would require capturing the American state, which he presumably rejects also (as do I). The confusion might stem from Mr. Daniel's misunderstanding of Constantinianism. Far from being "our model for religious tolerance," Constantinianism was intolerant.

Second, it is certain that persecution can strengthen the Church and that persecution only happens at God's sufferance. But where in Scripture or church teaching are we told to try to provoke persecution? Our twofold mandate is to spread and live out the gospel; whether persecution is permitted or withheld, we are, with St. Paul, to persevere and be content.

Third, Mr. Daniel's evident vision of a Church determined to remain a perpetually persecuted minority seems to be a serious failure of charity and hence incoherent. Such a Church, to remain faithful, would need permanently to exist alongside a larger society that is, in the Christian view, lost. Surely it is the height of selfishness—and hence self-defeating—to try to keep others in darkness so that we might remain in the light.

None of this is to deny the costs of living in America today, including the often subtle co-optation of the Church that Mr. Daniel describes. Nor does it imply that we should cease criticizing our society or strengthening our own countercultures. But we cannot fully evade the costs of being American without incurring other serious costs. Mr. Daniel's program is obscure, but its costs would appear high indeed: either keeping the gospel to ourselves or bringing back Tomás de Torquemada.

Mr. Daniel begins his letter with a gratuitous attack on the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia, with which I am affiliated. The Institute comprises many scholars producing all manner of fine work. I would hope that readers will no more judge the Institute by my article than they might judge my alma mater, Duke University, by Mr. Daniel's letter.

The Rhetoric of Prayer

In "Editorial Secrets Revealed" and the note on the "Adoremus Bulletin" (While We're At It, Public Square, April), Richard John Neuhaus focused on the use of proper grammar and elegant language. I am sympathetic with Father Neuhaus about the lack of clarity and elegance in the language we use at every level of our national conversations. In conversations with junior-high-school children I notice their complete ignorance of the objective case of the relative pronoun. In sermons (I myself preach weekly and am not above reproach) I am appalled at the confusion of language and disorder of outline. I shudder to listen to the leader of the free world, who unfortunately has no ear for the rhythms of good rhetoric.

But having said all of that, I would like to speak at least a few words in defense of colloquialism. I use an altar book containing many prayers traceable to ancient sacramentaries of the Western Church. These are by any literary measure excellent. As a matter of fact, one can usually pick out the newer ones only because they are poorer in literary style. But they are lousy prayers for my congregation. The people that I lead in prayer do not pray in literary styles. The brunt of their personal prayer is much closer to Luther's "O God, have mercy!" As I lead them in prayer and teach them to pray, my concern is much less to teach them elegance and much more to help

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

them express the yearnings of their souls for the merciful intervention of the Lord. Between elegance and relevance, a balance must be struck.

(The Rev.) Douglas Stowe
St. Stephen Lutheran Church
Waterford, Michigan

RJN replies:
Balanced as I am, I take Pastor Stowe's point, in part. There is no literary problem, it seems to me, with Luther's "O God, have mercy!" More generally, there is certainly a place for the colloquial in preaching, but I would suggest that liturgical language should always be elevated. It may at times require, and invite, homiletical or catechetical explanation, but in general we need to be fitted to the language of the liturgy, not the language of the liturgy fitted to us. My dear friend, the late Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, was once accosted by a lady who complained that the synagogue service did not say what she meant. "Madam," said Heschel, "the idea is not that the service should say what we mean but that we should mean what the service says."

Paul Ramsey's Style

I write in defense of Paul Ramsey. In "Editorial Secrets Revealed," Richard John Neuhaus insists that Paul Ramsey was "a bad writer" (Public Square, April). Ramsey is not here to defend himself, so I must rise to the occasion.

In truth, I once shared Father Neuhaus' opinion. Indeed, once early in my time at Notre Dame I conspired to have Ramsey come to give a lecture. I was to introduce him. In my introduction I noted that some people thought Ramsey's style convoluted. In order, ironically, to combat this view, I then read the following sentence from *War and the Christian Conscience*:

> If at this point the natural man in us exclaims, or the man insufficiently schooled by Christ, that it is humanly impossible to let go the blow and withhold the animosity, or to let go the bullet and withhold the intention in the manner Aquinas describes, and moreover that it is bad casuistry to suppose there is much difference anyway between an act which is good and right in its 'species' according to what is intended and one that is not, since both bring about the death of the attacker with equal certainty, if any Christian should say this, and should he also propose as an alternative that the matter be settled more simply on grounds of the plain right of self-defense, then it might be replied that this means to let go justice at an attacker and withhold love, and that this shows the complex intentionality of any Christian action in such critical situations—except, of course, an act of nonresistance, to either innocent or unjust aggressors alike.

Might not this sentence suggest that Ramsey first wrote his books in German and then translated them into English? Ramsey accepted my kidding in good humor, but after he returned to Princeton, he sent me his calling card, on the back of which was written a quotation from a review of *War and the Christian Conscience* from the *Church Times*, August 11, 1961. That quote reads, "Incidentally, the book is written in a beautifully articulate style which reveals an exceptionally clear and charitable mind, and makes it, insofar as any book on this subject can be, a positive pleasure to read."

So there, Fr. Neuhaus, let Ramsey have the last word!

Stanley Hauerwas
Duke University
Raleigh, North Carolina

Correction

Joseph Bottum's "The End of the Pius Wars" (April) incorrectly states that the cover of David Kertzer's *The Popes Against the Jews* shows a photo of a Nazi with a whip. In fact, the photo is on the cover of Michael Phayer's *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust.* Moreover, what purports to be a photo of Pius XII on Kertzer's dust jacket is, in fact, a photo of Pius XI.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Opinion

Traducing Solzhenitsyn

Daniel J. Mahoney

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn is one of the great souls of the age. He is also among its most maligned and misunderstood figures. It is hard to think of another prominent writer whose thought and character have been subjected to as many willful distortions and vilifications over the past thirty years.

Things were not always so. Until the early 1970s Solzhenitsyn was widely admired in the West as a dissident and as a critic of Communist totalitarianism. On the left he was appreciated as a defender of human rights against an undeniably illiberal and autocratic regime. But with the publication of works such as *August 1914* (1972), the *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*, and the cultural-spiritual anthology *From Under the Rubble* (both published in the West in 1974), it became impossible to claim Solzhenitsyn as a champion of left-liberal secularism. He continued to be, of course, a ferocious critic of the ideological "lie" and a tenacious defender of fundamental human liberties. But this anti-totalitarian writer clearly did not believe that a free Russia should become a slavish imitator of the secular, postmodern West. It became increasingly clear that he was both an old-fashioned patriot and a committed Christian—but here also he was perplexing to some, because he adamantly rejected "blood and soil" nationalism, expressed no desire to return to the Tsarist past, and asked for no special privileges for Christianity in a post-totalitarian Russia.

Some of his critics soon reasoned that if Solzhenitsyn was not a conventional liberal, then he must be an enemy of liberty. The legend grew that he was, at best, a "Slavophile" and a romantic critic of decadent Western political institutions, and that he was, at worst, an authoritarian and even, perhaps, an anti-Semite and a theocrat. Even those Western critics who admired Solzhenitsyn's courage in confronting the Communist behemoth and who drew upon his dissections of ideological tyranny tended to slight his contribution to the renewal of the spiritual foundations of human liberty in a post-totalitarian world. In a memorable article published in *Commentary* in 1985 ("The Terrible Question of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn"), Norman Podhoretz praised Solzhenitsyn as an anti-Communist and as the author of *The Gulag Archipelago*, while largely taking for granted the accuracy of the caricature about him that had taken shape over the previous decade and a half. Podhoretz simply assumed that Solzhenitsyn was an authoritarian or anti-democratic thinker, though he did acquit Solzhenitsyn, a strong supporter of the state of Israel, of the charge of anti-Semitism. He also cavalierly dismissed as a literary failure *The Red Wheel*, Solzhenitsyn's magnum opus that explores the events leading up to the Bolshevik revolution. (Podhoretz was in no position to do so at the time since he did not have access to any of the finished volumes of that great work.) The anti-Communist Podhoretz, however, never denied Solzhenitsyn's greatness or his enduring commitment to human dignity.

Unfortunately, other American conservatives have succumbed to the facile consensus that has developed about Solzhenitsyn—a consensus that has, as we shall see, little connection with reality. The same tiresome distortions are recycled ad nauseam and contribute to a willful refusal to consider Solzhenitsyn's thinking about the political and spiritual condition of modern man. My experience has been that even those who are well disposed toward Solzhenitsyn are genuinely surprised to learn that he is, in fact, an indefatigable advocate of democratic self-government, a critic of illiberal nationalism in all its forms, an erudite historian who has defended authentic Russian liberalism against its reactionary and revolutionary opponents, and an Orthodox Christian who does not take an exclusivist view toward other Christians and recognizes the wisdom inherent in all the great religions of the world. There is, to be sure, a good deal of impressive scholarship about Solzhenitsyn in all the major European languages, but such work rarely gains the kind of public hearing that would alter the reigning public perceptions about the Russian Nobel laureate.

Serious, informed, and measured engagement with Solzhenitsyn's writing is all too rare in America. Some of Solzhenitsyn's critics are content to sneer at him without bothering to produce quotations that would support their characterizations of his thought. The distinguished historian Richard Pipes has used this tendentious mode in his recent memoir, *Vixi*, in which Pipes calls Solzhenitsyn "quite innocent of historical knowledge" and declares, without offering any evidence, that Solzhenitsyn is committed to an impossible "'Holy Russia' of his imagination." After acknowledging Solzhenitsyn's "courage in standing up to the equally hate-filled and equally fanatical Communist regime," Pipes goes on to dismiss him as a "false prophet" full of "hate-driven intellectual intolerance."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Thus Pipes fabricates a moral equivalence between the author of *The Gulag Archipelago* and the inhuman regime he did so much to bring to its knees. This shameful comparison dishonors Pipes, who here lends his considerable authority to the vituperative campaign against Solzhenitsyn.

The Russian-born libertarian journalist Cathy Young provides an equally shoddy account of the writings of Solzhenitsyn in the May 2004 issue of *Reason* magazine ("Traditional Prejudices: The Anti-Semitism of Alexander Solzhenitsyn"). Her subject is *Dvesti let vmeste* (*Two Hundred Years Together*), Solzhenitsyn's monumental study of Russian-Jewish relations. (Volume one was published in 2001 and volume two in 2003; there is as yet no English translation. See the July-August 2004 issue of *Society* for my extensive discussion of this work.) In a calm and authoritative-sounding tone, Young engages in nothing less than character assassination, eschewing anything that resembles *explication de texte* and ignoring everything in Solzhenitsyn's writings that might militate against her claims.

A reader of her essay, for example, would never learn about Solzhenitsyn's condemnation of "scandalous restrictions" against Jews under the Russian old regime, his criticisms of the Russian state for its "unpardonable inaction" in failing to anticipate and respond to brutal anti-Jewish pogroms, his admiration for the great Russian statesman Pyotr Stolypin's efforts to end the Jewish disabilities, or his criticism of the White forces during the Russian Civil War for their inexcusable toleration of anti-Semitic violence in territories under their control. Nor would one learn about his moving and somber discussion in chapter twenty-one of *Two Hundred Years Together* of the Holocaust unleashed against Jews on Soviet territory. In that chapter Solzhenitsyn narrates the truly mind-boggling facts regarding the extermination of Soviet Jews in the western territories of the Soviet Union. It is true that he refuses to choose between the two terrible totalitarianisms of the twentieth century: this is because Communist and Nazi totalitarianism are equally deserving of unqualified condemnation by all decent people. Solzhenitsyn refuses to set the sufferings of Russians and Jews against each other. The "totality of suffering" experienced by both at the hands of the Communist and Nazi regimes was "so great, the weight of the lessons inflicted by History so unsupportable, the anguish for the future so gnawing" that it is imperative that such suffering give rise to empathy and understanding between Russians and Jews.

Throughout these two volumes, Solzhenitsyn is emphatic in his condemnation of all bigoted and hostile depictions of Jews *qua* Jews, and he expresses the deepest respect for the spiritual greatness of the Jewish people. He never attributes "collective guilt" to Jews or any other people. To be sure, he calls on Russians and Jews alike to take "collective responsibility" for their respective sins and omissions. In his view, Russians and Jews must both come to terms with the members of their peoples who acted in complicity with the Communist regime. They should also stop blaming others for all of their misfortunes and discontents. Jews must not pretend that every Jew was a victim, that there were no "revolutionary assassins" in their midst. And Russians must admit that they were the "authors of [their own revolutionary] shipwreck" and resist the deluded inclination "to blame everything on the Jews."

Instead of accurately reporting Solzhenitsyn's published views, Young resurrects several discredited indictments, perhaps the most egregious one being that the author of *The Gulag Archipelago* is not a true friend of human liberty but is instead a partisan of a traditionalist collectivism. She shows no awareness of Solzhenitsyn's eloquent defenses of the rule of law and the importance of local self-government to a healthy and well-constituted civic life. The third and final volume of *The Gulag Archipelago*, for example, ends with a stirring denunciation of the absence of the rule of law in Soviet Russia, and all of Solzhenitsyn's recent political writings invoke the crucial importance of local self-government for the consolidation of political liberty and civic virtue in post-Communist Russia. Solzhenitsyn does not slight what Russians can learn from the Western and American experiences of democratic self-government. Addressing the town meeting of Cavendish, Vermont (his home from 1976 until 1994), shortly before returning to his native Russia, he spoke thoughtfully about how in Cavendish and its neighboring communities he had "observed the sensible and sure process of grassroots democracy, in which the local population solves most of its problems on its own, not waiting for the decisions of higher authorities. Unfortunately, we do not have this in Russia, and that is still our greatest shortcoming."

More fundamentally, Young shows no appreciation of the personalism that informs nearly every page of *The Gulag Archipelago*. This is a remarkable lacuna since the book is nothing less than "a celebration of personality," to cite the apt formulation of the distinguished Russianist John B. Dunlop. The *Gulag*'s portraits of freedom-loving individuals and indomitable souls such as the young Zoya Leshcheva (who fearlessly defended her religious faith against her atheistic persecutors), the defiant Anna Skripnikova (who had the self-respect to act as a free citizen in a totalitarian state and spent the years from 1918 to 1959 in and out of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

prison), the committed escaper Georgi Tenno, and the religious poet Anatoli Silin, are unforgettable encomia to the human spirit. As any charitable reader of the *Gulag* will discern, Solzhenitsyn is no collectivist. But neither is he a "libertarian" who ignores the indispensable moral foundations of human liberty. Of course, Young has every right to quarrel with Solzhenitsyn's account of Russian history or with his understanding of the moral and religious foundations of human liberty. But it is dishonest, and worse, to accuse him of anti-Semitism or to label him an enemy of human freedom.

How does one begin to break out of this interminable recycling of distortions and misrepresentations? To begin with, it is necessary to recognize that the defense of human liberty and dignity is not exhausted by the categories or assumptions of late modernity. Solzhenitsyn is a liberal in the sense that he is acutely aware of the myriad moral and cultural prerequisites of human liberty. In particular, he belongs to a noble Russian tradition that attempts to breathe "only the best air from the West" while "feeding ourselves only with the best milk from our own Mother Russia." These words of the prerevolutionary Russian journalist M. O. Menshikov are highlighted in James H. Billington's excellent new book *Russia in Search of Itself* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 256 pp., $24.95). As Billington points out, the most illuminating Russian thought of the past 125 years—from Soloviev, Bulgakov, and Berdiaev, to Solzhenitsyn and D. M. Likhachev today—has attempted to draw on the best of the Western *and* Russian philosophical, theological, literary, and political traditions. This synthesizing current, which is suspicious of Western nihilism and scientism as well as of Eastern despotism, is all but ignored by Western elites today, who reflexively identify liberalism with materialism, relativism, and political correctness.

Solzhenitsyn has meditated on this problem of conjugating Russia and the West, liberty and the moral contents of life, with great penetration and finesse in the various volumes of *The Red Wheel*. These books include profound reflections on the character of political moderation and the requirements of a statesmanship that would unite Christian attentiveness to the spiritual dignity of man with an appreciation of the need to respect the unceasing evolution of society. Solzhenitsyn takes aim at reactionaries who ignore the inexorability of human "progress," at revolutionaries who take nihilistic delight in destroying the existing order, and at "false liberals" who refuse to explore prudently the necessarily difficult relations between order and liberty, progress and tradition.

In nearly all of his major writings, Solzhenitsyn appeals to the indispensability of the spiritual qualities of "repentance" and "self-limitation" for a truly balanced individual and collective life. But he never turns the classical or Christian virtues into an antimodern ideology that would escape the reality of living with the tensions inherent in a dynamic, modern society. He is not, however, unduly sanguine about the prospects for these virtues in the contemporary scene. As he writes in *November 1916*, "In the life of nations, even more than in private life, the rule is that concessions and self-limitation are ridiculed as naïve and stupid." Solzhenitsyn thus has no illusions about repentance and self-limitation becoming the explicit and unchallenged foundation of free political life. His more modest hope is to claim a hearing for the Good amidst the cacophony of claims that vie for public notice. Neither genuflecting before progress nor irresponsibly rejecting it, Solzhenitsyn insists that we must "seek and expand ways of directing its might towards the perpetration of good." Solzhenitsyn's moral vision has too often been politicized in ways that mistake his rejection of progressivist illusions for a reactionary refusal to admit the possibility of progress.

Solzhenitsyn is, in truth, a conservative liberal who wants to temper the one-sided modern preoccupation with individual freedom with a salutary reminder of the moral ends that ought to inform responsible human choice. Like the best classical and Christian thinkers of the past, he believes that human beings should not "neglect their spiritual essence" or "show an exaggerated concern for man's material needs." Thus, while he displays a rich appreciation of the limits of politics, he also recognizes that "a Christian must . . . actively endeavor to improve the holders of power and the state system." And when Solzhenitsyn addresses specifically political questions he does so as a principled advocate of political moderation. His portrait in *August 1914* of Prime Minister Pyotr Stolypin's efforts to establish a constitutional order that would be consistent with Russia's spiritual traditions and that would keep Russia from falling into the revolutionary abyss contains some of the wisest pages ever written about statesmanship.

The shamefully one-sided journalistic and critical reception too often accorded to Solzhenitsyn's work thus serves as an unintended confirmation of the difficulty of pursuing what he has called the "middle line" in the service of human liberty and human dignity. Solzhenitsyn has used his literary gifts and moral witness to teach us, as he says in *The Gulag Archipelago*, "that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either—but through all human hearts." Today, though he is eighty-five years old and has had

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

some physical setbacks, he remains committed to his writing. Moreover, his stature and moral authority remain high where it most counts: in his native Russia. In response to the recent awarding of the Solzhenitsyn Prize to the actor and the director of the television series that brought Dostoevski's *The Idiot* to the screen, the popular writer Darya Dontsova commented that "the great Solzhenitsyn is in reality a very modern man, and young of heart." Most importantly, amidst the corruption and moral drift of the post-Communist transition, he has never ceased to remind his compatriots that they "must build a moral Russia or none at all." He remains an intrepid defender of a freedom that is worthy of man and has thus maintained faith with the best in both Russian and Western traditions. He merits our continuing gratitude, respect, and admiration.

Daniel J. Mahoney is chairman of the political science department at Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts and the author of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn: The Ascent From Ideology *(2001). His latest book,* Bertrand de Jouvenel: The Conservative Liberal and the Illusions of Modernity, *will be released by ISI Books in the spring of 2005.*

The Necessary Amendment

Robert H. Bork

Within the next two or three years, the Supreme Court will almost certainly climax a series of state court rulings by creating a national constitutional right to homosexual marriage. The Court's ongoing campaign to normalize homosexuality—creating for homosexuals constitutional rights to special voting status and to engage in sodomy—leaves little doubt that the Court has set its course for a right to marry. This is but one of a series of cultural debacles forced upon us by judges following no law but their own predilections. This one, however, will be nuclear. As an example of judicial incontinence, it will rival *Roe v. Wade*, and will deal a severe and quite possibly fatal blow to two already badly damaged but indispensable institutions—marriage and the rule of law in constitutional interpretation.

The wreckage may be subtler but more widespread even than that. Such a decision would ratify, in the most profound way, the anarchical spirit of extreme personal and group autonomy that is the driving force behind much of our cultural degradation. Call it what you will—moral chaos, relativism, postmodernism—extreme notions of autonomy already suffuse our culture, quite aside from any assistance from the courts. But judicial endorsement, which is taken by much of the public to state a moral as well as a legal truth, makes the anything-goes mentality even harder to resist. The principle undergirding radical autonomy is essentially unconfineable. Thus, Justice Byron White, Senator Rick Santorum, and William Bennett have all made the point that the rationale for same-sex marriage would equally support group marriage, incest, or any other imaginable sexual arrangement.

That surely is the meaning, insofar as it has a discernible meaning, of the imperialistic "mystery passage" first articulated by three justices in a case upholding the right to abortion and repeated in the majority opinion creating a right to homosexual sodomy:

> [Our] law affords constitutional protection to . . . the most intimate and personal choices a person may make in a lifetime, choices central to personal dignity and autonomy, [which] are central to the liberty protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. At the heart of liberty [protected by the Constitution] is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.

Reading these words, it is hard to know what there is left for legislatures to do, since each individual is now a sovereign nation.

The only real hope of heading off the judicial drive to constitutionalize homosexual marriage is in the adoption of an amendment to the Constitution. The language of the amendment now before Congress is this:

> Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this Constitution nor the constitution of any state shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups.

The amendment is intended primarily to stop activist courts from redefining marriage in any way they see fit, as the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts has recently done. The first sentence, however, also limits legislatures by defining marriage as the people of the United States and of the West have known it.

Given that the stakes riding on the outcome of the effort to adopt the Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA) are so high, it is surprising that so many social

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

conservatives have expressed opposition. Though these are men for whom I have the highest regard, in this instance I think they are mistaken. Their mistake, it seems to me, derives from a conservative constitutionalism which, though laudable in the past, is now, most unfortunately, obsolete. Walter Bagehot, writing of the English constitution in the nineteenth century, said, "[I]n the full activity of an historical constitution, its subjects repeat phrases true in the time of their fathers, and inculcated by those fathers, but now no longer true." So it is with us. Michael Greve correctly places the same-sex marriage issue in a wider context: "[T]he broader, more menacing problem is judicial usurpation. . . . [W]hat truly grates is the notion of having [homosexual marriage] dictated by willful, contemptuous judges." Conservative constitutionalism today requires taking back the original Constitution to restore the constitutional order and representative government. If that requires amending the Constitution to recall the judges to their proper function, so be it. There is no other remedy available to save or, more accurately, to restore a republican form of government.

The conservative columnists George F. Will and Charles Krauthammer, however, seem to me to illustrate Bagehot's maxim. Will has written that "amending the Constitution to define marriage as between a man and a woman would be unwise for two reasons. Constitutionalizing social policy is generally a misuse of fundamental law. And it would be especially imprudent to end state responsibility for marriage law at a moment when we require evidence of the sort that can be generated by allowing the states to be laboratories of social policy." To his point about the unwisdom of putting social policy in the Constitution, it is fair to reply that the entire document can be seen as expressing social policy, and certainly parts of the Bill of Rights, such as the guarantee of the free exercise of religion, do exactly that. The real difficulty with Will's position, however, is his notion that the states will be allowed to be laboratories of social policy. They will not; the Supreme Court, as in the case of *Roe*, will simply replace the social policies of all of the states with its own policy.

The most likely route to that ruling is the following. A homosexual couple will marry in Massachusetts, move to another state (say, Texas), and claim the status and benefits of marriage there. They will cite the Full Faith and Credit Clause of Article IV of the Constitution, which declares that states must accept the public acts of every other state. Texas will refuse recognition, relying on the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), passed in reliance on Article IV's further provision that Congress may prescribe the effect of such out-of-state acts. The couple will respond with a challenge to DOMA under the federal Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses. The Supreme Court will then uphold their challenge by finding a federal constitutional right to same-sex marriage that invalidates DOMA. The FMA would prevent this almost-certain outcome. Instead of state-by-state experimentation, we are going to have a uniform rule one way or the other: homosexual marriage everywhere or nowhere. The choice is that stark and judges are forcing us to make it.

Charles Krauthammer agrees that "there is not a chance in hell that the Supreme Court will uphold" DOMA. He concludes, nonetheless, that "I would probably vote against the amendment because for me the sanctity of the Constitution trumps everything, even marriage." His point would be well taken if it were not much too late to worry about the sanctity of a document the Supreme Court has been shredding for fifty years. Surely the Court's diktats, which are themselves profoundly unconstitutional, are not sacred. As matters now stand, the "sanctity of the Constitution" is a smoke screen providing cover for judicial activism. Taking action through authentically constitutional means to prevent yet another constitutional travesty shows greater respect for the document than standing by while five of nine justices chisel into the tablets of the law the caprices of the elite class to which they respond. An amendment preventing one instance of judicial depredation would at least represent a democratic choice—indeed a choice by supermajorities, given the requirement of a two-thirds vote in each house of Congress and then ratification by three-quarters of the states.

There is one other objection expressed by Krauthammer, however: "I would be loath to see some future democratic consensus in favor of gay marriage (were that to come to pass) blocked by such an amendment." That objection could, of course, be made to every provision of the Constitution; each and every one precludes some action by a future democratic consensus. If, for example, a national majority should want to make foreign-born naturalized citizens eligible for the presidency or to abolish jury trials in complex lawsuits, that democratic consensus would be frustrated by the Constitution.

Michael Greve suggests a constitutional amendment that would preserve the value of state experimentation while heading off the Supreme Court creation of homosexual marriage:

> The United States Constitution shall not be construed to require the federal government, or any state or territory, to define marriage as anything except the union of one man and one woman.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> The United States Constitution shall not be construed to require any state or territory to give effect to any public act, record, or judicial proceeding respecting a relationship between persons of the same sex that is treated as a marriage under the laws of another state or territory.

This amendment would leave states free to give effect to the acts of other states or not, as they see fit. Greve suggests that state legislatures could control the choice through legislation allowing or forbidding their courts to honor out-of-state homosexual marriages.

There seem both legal and sociological problems with this proposal. The language leaves out of account what state courts may do with state constitutions. A state supreme court could very well hold—and a number of them certainly will—that its state constitution contains a right to homosexual marriage or, alternatively, that its constitution mandates recognition of such marriages contracted elsewhere. It is not a sufficient answer that the citizenry could respond by amending the state constitution. In many states the amending process is quite difficult and time-consuming; and a state supreme court's ruling will itself affect the balance in the electorate. The cultural aristocracy—the news media, university faculties, many churches, foundations, television networks, and Hollywood—will continue, as they have already been doing, to propagandize massively and incessantly for the normality of homosexuality and the right to marry. It may be doubted that many states will muster supermajorities overruling their courts in the face of this cultural tsunami. There seems no way to guard against state court activism on this issue, which we have already seen in Hawaii, Vermont, and Massachusetts, except by a federal amendment that binds state as well as federal courts.

As seems inevitable in discussions about reining in runaway courts, some have suggested that instead of amending the Constitution, Congress should deny all federal courts jurisdiction to deal with the marriage issue. Congress has power under Article III of the Constitution to make exceptions to the appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and to remove lower court jurisdiction. This proposal, though endorsed by a commentator as sound as Arnold Beichman, is, as always, a nonstarter, and merely diverts some Congressmen from addressing the problem seriously. If the Supreme Court allowed its jurisdiction over a particular subject to be abolished, which is by no means a certainty, the result would be to leave jurisdiction in the state courts. Article VI provides that "the Judges in every State shall be bound" by the Constitution and laws of the United States, and there is no power in either Congress or the state legislatures to take away that jurisdiction. The result, if Congress acted and the Court acquiesced, would be the same as under the constitutional amendment suggested by Michael Greve, except that state courts could rely upon both the federal and state constitutions to invent, as the courts of Massachusetts and Hawaii have under their state constitutions, a right to same-sex marriage.

Amending the United States Constitution to save it and marriage from freebooting judges would be extremely difficult in the best of circumstances, but it is made immeasurably more difficult because so many people ask: How does homosexual marriage affect me? What concern is it of mine or of anybody else what homosexuals do? The answer is that the consequences of homosexual marriage will affect you, your children, and your grandchildren, as well as the morality and health of the society in which you and they live.

Studies of the effects of same-sex marriage in Scandinavia and the Netherlands by Stanley Kurtz raise at least the inference that when there is a powerful (and ultimately successful) campaign by secular elites for homosexual marriage, traditional marriage is demeaned and comes to be perceived as just one more sexual arrangement among others. The symbolic link between marriage, procreation, and family is broken, and there is a rapid and persistent decline in heterosexual marriages. Families are begun by cohabiting couples, who break up significantly more often than married couples, leaving children in one-parent families. The evidence has long been clear that children raised in such families are much more likely to engage in crime, use drugs, and form unstable relationships of their own. These are pathologies that affect everyone in a community.

Homosexual marriage would prove harmful to individuals in other ways as well. By equating heterosexuality and homosexuality, by removing the last vestiges of moral stigma from same-sex couplings, such marriages will lead to an increase in the number of homosexuals. Particularly vulnerable will be young men and women who, as yet uncertain of and confused by their sexuality, may more easily be led into a homosexual life. Despite their use of the word "gay," for many homosexuals life is anything but gay. Both physical and psychological disorders are far more prevalent among homosexual men than among heterosexual men. Attempted suicide rates, even in countries that are homosexual-friendly, are three to four times as high for homosexuals. Though it is fre-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

quently asserted by activists that high levels of internal distress in homosexual populations are caused by social disapproval, psychiatrist Jeffrey Satinover has shown that no studies support this theory. Compassion, if nothing else, should urge us to avoid the consequences of making homosexuality seem a normal and acceptable choice for the young.

There is, finally, very real uncertainty about the forms of sexual arrangements that will follow from homosexual marriage. To quote William Bennett: "Say what they will, there are no principled grounds on which advocates of same-sex marriage can oppose the marriage of two consenting brothers. Nor can they (persuasively) explain why we ought to deny a marriage license to three men who want to marry. Or to a man who wants a consensual polygamous arrangement. Or to a father to his adult daughter." Many consider such hypotheticals ridiculous, claiming that no one would want to be in a group marriage. The fact is that some people do, and they are urging that it be accepted. There is a movement for polyamory—sexual arrangements, including marriage, among three or more persons. The outlandishness of such notions is no guarantee that they will not become serious possibilities or actualities in the not-too-distant future. Ten years ago, the idea of a marriage between two men seemed preposterous, not something we needed to concern ourselves with. With same-sex marriage a line is being crossed, and no other line to separate moral and immoral consensual sex will hold.

We are in a time of deep moral confusion about sex and particularly about homosexuality. Consider: the Catholic Church is berated for putting homosexual men in charge of boys while the Boy Scouts are punished for not putting homosexual men in charge of boys. At the same time, as Mary Eberstadt points out, the rightness or wrongness of pedophilia (involving boys, not girls) is "demonstrably not yet settled within certain parts of the gay rights movement." Eberstadt reports that the taboo against pedophilia is weakening. Some homosexual activists, such as the North American Man/Boy Love Association, are working to that end. Nothing, one is tempted to say, is any longer unimaginable, and what is imaginable is doable.

Is passing the FMA worth the energy and the political risk for politicians, especially when it may well be a losing battle? Social conservatives, Max Boot notes, have been fighting and losing culture wars for decades. That is obvious, but his recommendation that we acknowledge defeat on the issue of homosexual marriage and move on to other issues is bad advice. This issue seems to me so important that a fight against it, whatever the odds, is mandatory. Abandoning resistance here might nevertheless be seen by some as an intelligent strategy, but that would be true only if there were a more defensible line to fall back to. It is difficult to see what line that might be. The cultural left, including homosexual activists, will keep pressing for more. The BBC, as a foretaste of what is to come, has ordered its staff not to use the words "husband" and "wife," since that might seem to indicate that marriage is preferable to other sexual arrangements. In Canada, a pastor has been charged under a hate speech law for publishing instances of the Bible's disapproval of homosexuality. Church leaders who imagine they can negotiate immunities from laws applying to the rest of the population are almost certainly fooling themselves. Liberal autonomists have little or no respect for religion, except to the extent that some clergy can be recruited to advance their causes in the name of religion. The Catholic Church will be a particular target of attack, as it already has been in California, where the state supreme court ruled that Catholic Charities had to provide prescription contraceptive coverage in its health insurance plan for employees.

Boot's advice to cut and run on this issue thus ignores the fact that there are fewer and fewer places to run to. The autonomous drive toward cultural degradation will not leave us in peace, ever. Boot may be right to predict that Republican support for a marriage amendment would make the party "look 'intolerant' to soccer moms whose views on this subject, as on so many others, will soon be as liberal as elite opinion already is." But if that is true, it means that we will lose all the cultural battles of the future, as the soccer moms trail along behind elite opinion. If Republicans refuse to fight cultural battles on that reasoning, they will look cowardly to conservatives, which could be equally disastrous. It would be better to try to convince the soccer moms, who would not be at all happy if their children and grandchildren cohabited instead of marrying, or "married" persons of the same sex.

Finally, it is worth considering that a vigorous campaign for the FMA could have a salutary effect on the American judiciary. The debates, win or lose, might also lead the public to a more realistic view of the courts. As William F. Buckley, Jr. has written on another occasion, "The public—under the tutelage of its moral and intellectual leaders—is being trained, as regards the Supreme Court of the United States when it is interpreting the Constitution, to accept its rulings as if rendered ex cathedra, on questions of faith and morals." Thus, a constitutional amendment "done athwart the will of the Court for the first time

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in modern history . . . would deliver the Republic from a presumptuous ethical-legal tribunal." "The public," Buckley argues, "needs to experience a release from a subtle thralldom to judicial morality." Quite right.

Conservative opinion leaders must recognize that the illegitimacy of the rampant judicial constitution-making that is before their eyes changes all the old rules about the place of amendments in our polity. The comfortable shibboleths about a heavy presumption against amending the Constitution no longer have much relevance to the brute facts of our political life. So profound is the departure from a republican form of government that the presumption must now be in favor of amending the Constitution whenever the Court runs wild. Homosexual marriage presents just such an occasion, but if our politicians wait until the Supreme Court has done the inevitable, it will probably be too late for an effective response. Catastrophes ought not to be faced in a spirit of resignation.

Robert H. Bork is Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute and Tad and Dianne Taube Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution. He is a professor at Ave Maria School of Law and the University of Richmond School of Law.

Islamic Counter-Reformation

Paul Marshall

Here in the West, one response to the growth of militant extremist Islam has been to suggest that Islam needs a "reformation"—that is, some kind of reform and renewal. I do not want to read too much into this rather loose application of the term, but I think it can be misleading if it suggests that the need is for an Islamic renewal broadly analogous to the sixteenth-century Protestant efforts to renew the Catholic Church. My own view is that many of the problems of contemporary Islam are more like Protestant problems than like Catholic problems, and therefore that something more akin to a dilution of Protestantism is required. Perhaps instead we should be urging an Islamic "Counter-Reformation."

Let's begin with Scripture. One Protestant emphasis is *sola scriptura*, which stresses reliance on the Bible alone, rather than on tradition, reason, and natural law thinking. Might there be a parallel in Islam, where one of the problems in contemporary thought, especially amongst more reactionary thinkers, is precisely scripturalism and literalism? Wahhabis, for example, seem to believe that they can start the process of interpretation of the Koran and the *hadith* anew, without reliance on traditional Islamic schools of law, theology, and philosophy. Hence they move in a mechanical way from the ancient text to its present application in sheer disregard of the myriad hermeneutical problems over which they glide.

This has few, if any, parallels in the contemporary Christian world (the widespread use of the pop sociological term "fundamentalist" notwithstanding). Since the Bible is acknowledged by even the most conservative to have been composed by many authors, in many genres and styles, over many centuries, in several languages, Christianity and Judaism have developed modes of exegesis in which very different styles of literature need to be reconciled into a more or less coherent whole. Even the most conservative Baptist does not take literally the prophecies in Daniel or the images in the Book of Revelation. Across the board they are seen as highly figurative texts, certainly not to be taken as realist descriptions. Indeed, the current American spate of interest in apocalyptic prophecy stems precisely from attempts to draw meaning from complex and difficult imagery.

By contrast, the Koran is understood by Muslims to have been revealed directly to Mohammed over a few short years—while the *hadith* cover only what Mohammed said and did—and the language and style is relatively consistent. All of this makes the development of any literary interpretive tradition in Islam very unlikely; to encourage even greater reliance on a *sola scriptura* approach would only compound the problem of literalistic scripturalism.

The other side of this stress on Scripture is a comparative neglect of reason and natural law. This point can be overstressed, since no significant Protestant rejected either (though Luther in his bad moods came close), but it is fair to say that these have been less than central in Protestantism. There seems to have been a similar pattern in recent Islam, wherein scripturalism and literalism have displaced philosophical and theological reflection.

It was not always this way. The Mu'tazilites, who sought to enrich their religious reflection through the study of Greek philosophy, were a dominant force in the ninth-century Abbasid Caliphate. Sufis do similar things with mystic and spiritual thought. These

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

movements have always existed in Islam. But the current wave of radical Islam, which is what prompts our calls for reformation, has downplayed or rejected these currents, and often persecuted their proponents.

The weakness of such reflection in contemporary Islam makes it harder for Muslims to debate, agree, or disagree either with one another or with non-Muslims, and vice versa. As John Courtney Murray observed, even disagreement is a genuine achievement: it requires that we first engage with and understand each other. In the modern age, we often never get as far as disagreeing: instead we assume that our opponents are irrational or wicked and so simply talk past them or denounce them.

This absence of general agreement or disagreement reveals how weak is much of our current intellectual engagement with Islam. A thousand years ago the greatest minds of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam—such as Thomas Aquinas, Maimonides, Al-Farabi, and Averroes—were engaged in fundamental debate about the nature of revelation, faith, reason, law, and political authority. In their disagreements they created a common discourse across their religious boundaries. In the modern age we are left instead with vacuous, and therefore futile, calls for toleration and diversity.

A similar problem occurs with discussions of natural law. If one believes that there is a natural law and that this law springs from God (as an expression of God's reason), Scripture can be understood also as teaching that law, and the law can be seen, at least in some cases, as lying within the text. This allows us to study Scripture in such a way as to discern an underlying body of systematic thought. Hence, for example, the requirement of Islamic law (*sharia*) to have four witnesses in order to secure a conviction for certain types of crime can be understood as a demand to make very sure that there is adequate evidence for such a conviction. In a desert society, of course, witnesses may be the only form of proof, and so their testimony is required. In a modern society, however, such evidence as fingerprinting, DNA testing, or other forensic means, could be understood as fulfilling the same goal and thus meeting the standard required by the text. The text, then, is understood not as primarily about numbers of witnesses but as a call for legal reliability and consistency in the rules of evidence.

A contrary view, a type of nominalism associated at its inception with William of Occam, would be that law, and thus good and evil, are rooted simply in God's will, with no necessary rational structure. Their reality is to be accepted rather than understood. This approach seems to be common in certain Islamic circles, which maintain that the text simply says what it says, with nothing beneath the surface, and so we must simply repeat it to the letter.

Connected to this stress on Scripture and relative downplaying of tradition, philosophy, and natural law is decentralization and fragmentation. Following the Protestant Reformation there began a proliferation of denominations and churches, a process that has continued into the twenty-first century and has now produced many independent congregations and clergy. In the United States, independent pastors and preachers can start churches or run newspapers, magazines, publishing houses, colleges, seminaries, radio stations, and TV stations. Since in practice their authority stems from their charisma (in the Weberian, if not necessarily the Pentecostal, sense), these pastors often have more power than their nominal governing boards and are subject to little structured accountability so long as they are successful. In the absence of a magisterium, the question of authority lies open, and such independent operators can maintain authority within their organizations so long as they continue to attract a following.

In Sunni Islam a similar fragmentation has occurred. Despite the authority of institutions such as Al-Azhar University in Egypt, and despite the high regard given to learning, a teacher or jurist can gain authority if he can draw followers. In practice such leaders can establish their own mosques and madrassas, as well as radio and TV shows. Osama bin Laden, it should be remembered, is an engineer, not a jurist, but in practice he can issue *fatwas* that have tremendous influence.

I am not suggesting that extremist Islam and terrorism find a counterpart in some conservative branches of Protestantism. Despite the fevered imaginings of some secularists who try to include them both as subspecies of a dubious general category of religious extremism, they are very different. Nevertheless some parallels between Protestant Christianity and contemporary Islam are worth considering. Both can tend to scripturalism, a relative downgrading of reason and natural law, fragmentation, and a proliferation of authority centers. In this situation, it might be good to put aside calls that suggest analogies to the Reformation, and instead think about whether Islam might be helped by something akin to a "Catholicization." I have no idea whether this is possible, but I do suggest that it might be a more useful metaphor for renewal in Islam.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It also suggests that we must think more deeply than most of us have about the actual intellectual content of Islamic terrorism. Much of our discourse implies that such extremists are people without ideas or rationale. We often simply call them "terrorists," but of course that tells us almost nothing. As Daniel Pipes has pointed out, terrorism is merely a means to an end: it is neither an end nor a rationale for an end. There are many different types of terrorists in the world. The Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, for example, have long engaged in terrorist suicide bombings, but while we may oppose them, they are not those with whom we are currently engaged in war.

At other times, extremist Muslims are simply described as hate-filled and evil. Such pejoratives also tell us very little about who they are, what they think, and what they want. After all, the world is replete with hate-filled and evil people, but most of them are not terrorists.

Alternatively, they are referred to by that old standby, "fundamentalist," a word dredged from the American past and of dubious provenance and meaning even there. Despite the efforts of sociologists and psychologists to give it some determinate content, it has never really transcended the common connotation of "religious nutcase"—or, perhaps more accurately, "religious nutcase with whom I disagree." Use of this word generally indicates a disposition to treat an ideological movement as if it were a personality type; it usually signifies a refusal to take seriously what people say they actually believe. "Fundamentalists" are people to be diagnosed rather than heard.

In any case, the term has little relation to terrorism or to the type of extremism with which we are concerned. Perhaps the most "fundamentalist" Christian groups in the United States are the Amish, the Hutterites, and the old order Mennonites—but few people lie awake at night for fear of Amish terrorism.

Psychologising can be a way of evading any real effort to understand religious beliefs. Another evasive tactic is to treat such professed beliefs merely as the sublimation of drives that can be explained by poverty, economic change, or the stresses of modernity. Of course, these factors may play a role: no part of human life is sealed off from any other. But instead of an effort at understanding, too often what we see is a methodological commitment to treat religion as secondary, as an evanescent and derivative phenomenon that may be explained away but can never be used to explain. In the face of extremist Islam, this kind of mindlessness is intellectual suicide.

Genuine mindfulness about the beliefs and aspirations of Islam is demonstrated for us by such thinkers as Bernard Lewis, who traces the precipitous decline of the Islamic world in the last five centuries and shows how much of the Muslim community asks itself continually the question "What went wrong?" Islamism and terrorism provide the latest of a series of answers to that galling question. Their answer is that Muslims have forsaken the purity of early Islam and have gone whoring after foreign, especially Western, ways. Their solution is an Islamic revival that will institute reactionary Islamic law throughout the world and restore the lost Caliphate; moreover, violence can and must be used to expel the West (understood as Christendom) and coerce fellow Muslims into the right path.

Bin Laden in his 1998 interview on Al-Jazeera television declared, "There are two parties to the conflict: world Christianity, which is allied with Jews and Zionism, led by the United States, Britain and Israel. The second party is the Islamic world." His 1998 merger with Egypt's Islamic Jihad formed the World Islamic Front for Holy War Against Jews and Crusaders, and he has described President Bush as fighting under the "sign of the cross." Al-Qaeda's manual begins by recalling "the fall of our orthodox Caliphates on March 3, 1924." Bin Laden's November 3, 2001, videotape proclaims, "Following World War I, which ended more than eighty-three years ago, the whole Islamic world fell under the Crusader banner." The grievance, continually expressed, is the collapse of the Islamic Caliphate and the Islamic world generally in the face of Christendom.

Islamist terrorism is not simply rooted in ignorance or poverty or in reactions to American policy in the Middle East. It is rooted in a religiously informed view of the world. To fight extremist Islam without engaging these religious ideas would be akin to fighting communism without bothering to learn anything of Marxism or Leninism.

An Islamic Counter-Reformation would require many things. One is a reconsideration of the work of the Mu'tazilites. This would mean reopening the gate of *ijtihad* (interpretation), which has been closed in Sunni Islam for many centuries. Along with such a revival of *ijtihad* would have to come theological reflection on the relation between revelation and history, along with the hermeneutical questions and opportunities that such reflection would bring with it. Many Muslims view the effects of biblical criticism in the West with skepticism and believe that it has been a major factor in undermining the strength of Christianity. There is truth in this, but it is not the only possible outcome: there are modes of biblical and historical criticism now accepted by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nearly all Christians, including the most orthodox.

When it comes to sources of authority, it is doubtful that Islam ever will, or ever should, have a formal magisterium. Al-Azhar has never been able to fill that role. But it may be possible and good to have a quasi-magisterium. This would require developing networks of moderate Islamic scholars and lawyers who could formulate joint *fatwas* in opposition to those issued by radicals, who are currently much better funded and organized. Such projects are currently underway, but they are still in their infancy.

Whether there will be a Counter-Reformation in Islam is, of course, something that Muslims will have to decide for themselves. But non-Muslims can help to encourage it, not least by engaging with Islam in a way that does not flinch from criticizing the religion, even while recognizing its considerable dignity and worth. Taking Islam seriously demands nothing less.

Paul Marshall is Senior Fellow at Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom and the author of Islam at the Crossroads *(2002)*, God and the Constitution *(2002)*, Religious Freedom in the World *(2000), and many other books on religion and politics. A version of this article will appear in* An Islamic Reformation? *(forthcoming from Global Policy Exchange).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Devil's Chaplain Confounded

Stephen M. Barr

A Devil's Chaplain is a collection of essays, book reviews, forewords, eulogies, and assorted "tirades and reflections" selected by Richard Dawkins from his work of the past twenty-five years. It is a miscellany that touches on postmodernism, the jury system, New Age superstitions, the late Stephen Jay Gould, the deaths of friends, the wonders of Africa, the perils of quack medicine, and more. The author is known as a writer on evolutionary theory and is perhaps the best-known exponent of Darwinism writing today. His style is often truculent—it has been said that if T. H. Huxley was called Darwin's bulldog, Dawkins should be called Darwin's pit bull—and on the subject of religion, in particular, he is rabid. He has his calmer moments, of course, and when he confines himself to zoology, his field of expertise, he is capable of writing in a lucid manner. In *A Devil's Chaplain* he presents himself as philosopher, social critic, and moralist, expounding on themes that are favorites of his: science and reason; the world of facts versus religion; superstition and wishful thinking.

A Devil's Chaplain: Reflections on Hope, Lies, Science, and Love

By Richard Dawkins
Houghton Mifflin
263 pp. $24.

His title is taken from a letter of Charles Darwin's in which he exclaims to a friend, "What a book a Devil's Chaplain might write on the clumsy, wasteful, blundering low and horridly cruel works of nature." Dawkins suggests that if Darwin had "decided to extend the list of melancholy adjectives," he would probably have added to it "selfish" and "blind." It is this view of nature that lies at the heart of the philosophy, morality, and social criticism that Dawkins presents here. For him, the great foundational truth is that the universe and the life it has spawned are without any ultimate purpose: the revelation given to the Devil's Chaplain is one of cosmic futility. What gospel, then, will a Devil's Chaplain preach?

Or to put it another way, what are "Darwinism's moral implications"? Dawkins poses this question in his title essay, which was written to introduce this collection, and cites two early and opposite responses to Darwinian evolutionary theory, those of George Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells. In the preface to *Back to Methuselah*, Shaw wrote of Darwinian evolution:

> When its whole significance dawns on you, your heart sinks into a heap of sand within you. There is a hideous fatalism about it, a ghastly and damnable reduction of beauty and intelligence, of strength and purpose, of honor and aspiration.

Wells, however, seemed to revel in the ruthlessness of nature, writing in his scientific utopian fantasy *The New Republic*:

> And how will the New Republic treat the inferior races? How will it deal with the black? . . . the yellow man? . . . the Jew? . . . those swarms of black,

Stephen M. Barr *is a theoretical particle physicist at the Bartol Research Institute of the University of Delaware. He is the author of* Modern Physics and Ancient Faith *(University of Notre Dame Press).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> and brown, and dirty-white, and yellow people, who do not come into the new needs of efficiency? Well, the world is a world, and not a charitable institution, and I take it they will have to go. . . . And the ethical system of these men of the New Republic, the ethical system which will dominate the world state, will be shaped primarily to favor the procreation of what is fine and efficient and beautiful in humanity—beautiful and strong bodies, clear and powerful minds. . . . And the method that nature has followed hitherto in the shaping of the world, whereby weakness was prevented from propagating weakness . . . is death. . . . The men of the New Republic . . . will have an ideal that will make the killing worth the while.

What is Dawkins' own response? Scientifically he cannot follow Shaw, who retreated, he says, into "a confused idea of Lamarckian evolution," and morally he cannot follow Wells, whose vision he properly calls "blood-chilling." Rather, Dawkins says, we must accept Darwinism as true science but must rebel against its moral implications: "[A]t the same time as I support Darwinism as a scientist, I am a passionate anti-Darwinian when it comes to politics and how we should conduct our human affairs." He reiterates the closing words of his own first book, *The Selfish Gene*: "We, alone on earth, can rebel against the tyranny of the selfish replicators." What enables us to rebel, he says, is the fact that nature, though mindless, has accidentally endowed us with intelligence. Our brain can understand the evolutionary process that gave rise to it, and thus can transcend it. Our "blessed gift of understanding" enables us to react with "revulsion" to nature's imperatives and to be the "only potential island of refuge from the implications of the Devil's Chaplain." (Dawkins employs such phrases as "blessed gift" from time to time but what he really means is fortuitous accident, and he generally says so clearly.)

This is Dawkins the humanist speaking: man is the great exception. And yet, Dawkins the scientist insists that we must come to terms with the "inescapable factual correctness of the Devil's Chaplain" and his view of life, "bleak and cold though it can seem from under the security blanket of ignorance." Endowed with reason, we have no alternative but to acknowledge the truth. We cannot be content with "cheap comforts, living a warm and comfortable lie." We cannot bask in "comforting delusions" or "suck at the pacifier of faith in immortality." We will, however, have compensation for our putting away of childish things. "There is deep refreshment to be had from standing up full-face into the keen wind of understanding." There is "the joy of knowing that you have grown up, [and] faced up to what existence means," or, rather, to its ultimate meaninglessness.

Dawkins often counsels us to face up to things. Another Darwinian lesson that we must face up to is that we are animals, with no special status or unique value among the animals. To think otherwise is "flagrant speciesism," "human chauvinism," and "human speciesist vanity." It is only a "discontinuous mind" (that is, a mind given to the making of false distinctions—and such minds are now, he says, "ubiquitous") that can claim to see a gap between such very close relatives as, for instance, humans and chimpanzees; and this deluded mind's only warrant for making such a distinction is the accidental happenstance that prior intermediate forms between man and chimp are all, evidently, dead. Dawkins goes so far as to say that the prospect of intentional human-and-chimp interbreeding, though he doubts its feasibility, is "a pleasing thought," because the resulting hybrid "would provide exactly the comeuppance that 'human dignity' needs." Here Dawkins the Darwinian seems to have elbowed aside Dawkins the "passionate anti-Darwinian" and humanist.

Religion takes a savage beating from Dawkins, especially Catholicism, for which he seems to have conceived an almost lunatic hatred. Nuns, in particular, disturb him because as educators they are given access to impressionable young minds. His theory of religion is spelled out in five essays gathered under the heading "The Infected Mind." Religion is simply a "virus of the mind," or a "meme" (a term he coined in his first book). A meme is an idea or word passed from mind to mind somewhat as a gene is passed from generation to generation. Religion exploits the fact that small children are preprogrammed by evolution to accept uncritically what adults tell them about the world. There is too much that small children have to learn about culture and life and language for critical filtering to be anything but a hindrance at that stage of life. It is this natural childish gullibility, carried into adulthood, which is the basis of religion, and of all belief systems based on authority, tradition, and revelation. (In an interview Dawkins has expressed the view that "you won't find *any* intelligent person who feels the need for the supernatural," unless that person was brought up as a child to believe in it.)

For Dawkins, the supernaturalism of religion is antiscientific and its doctrines absurd. The doctrine of the Trinity is "obvious nonsense," and "it takes a real, red-blooded Catholic to believe something as daft as transubstantiation." It is, however, the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Catholic dogma of the Assumption of Mary that for him is the *ne plus ultra* of religious silliness, with Mary's body "zooming off to Heaven." He freely avows both "hostility" and "contempt" for religion, and he feels it is his moral duty to mock it as much as he can. In an essay provoked by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, he writes, "Those of us who have for years politely concealed our contempt of religion need to stand up and speak out."

Polite concealment of contempt is not a rhetorical mode that one associates with Dawkins. He is much given to invective, not all of it against religion. Here is how he characterizes the thoughts and attitudes of some of his other targets: "caterwauling shrieks," "low-grade intellectual poodling of pseudo-philosophical poseurs," "footling debates," "boorish tenured confidence," "yahooish complacency," and "driveling ephemera of juvenile pamphleteers and the old preaching of spiteful hard-liners." The man, as they say nowadays, has issues. It appears that Dawkins and his publisher understand that he has acquired a reputation, even among his admirers, for having a rather icy philosophy and a nasty literary personality. We are therefore promised that this book (which contains, please note, the insults collected above and many more like them) will show us Dawkins' "gentler, more contemplative side, which may surprise many readers," his "warm, personal side," and his "sympathetic side." (These promises are made by the book's dust jacket, its publicist, and *Science News*, respectively). Dawkins seems aware of his image problem, for he writes in the introduction to the American edition: "Though I admit to occasional flames of (entirely justified) irritation in my writing, I like to think that the greater part of it is good-humored, perhaps even humorous."

One goal of this anthology, then, may be to humanize the flame-throwing controversialist. The eulogies and laments for dead colleagues gathered here show his capacity for deep feeling and deep friendships (as well as his facing-up abilities, of course). Dawkins' reviews of Stephen Jay Gould's books and the final e-mail correspondence between them display magnanimity toward a sometime intellectual foe. The essays about Africa, his "personal birthplace" and "our ancestral home," reveal his poetic nature. His letter to his ten-year-old daughter, which brings the book to a close, shows him as fatherly and as a man who does not talk down to children.

Whether all of this humanizes Dawkins is not for me to say; it is doubtless a speciesist concern in any case. Of more concern is the quality of his thinking, which is far from impressive. To call it low-grade intellectual poodling would perhaps be too harsh; but it is certainly not high-grade. The first thing to note is Dawkins' carelessness with facts. (This is especially strange in a man who so emphasizes the factuality of science, with its "testability, evidential support, precision, [and] quantifiability"). Here is a small sampler: speaking of neutrinos, he says that "on average one passes through you every second." Actually many billions of neutrinos pass through you every second, a fact well known to science buffs. In explaining an evolutionary idea he states that a certain quantity "grows as a power function," though any mathematically minded person would see that it grows exponentially. He attempts an elementary combinatoric calculation and gets it wrong. He discusses a well-known quantum phenomenon in terms that are incorrect. If one reads enough of Dawkins, one gets used to this sort of thing; in a previous book he showed that he did not know the difference between a cosmic ray and a gamma ray.

It could be urged, in extenuation of such mistakes, that Dawkins is not a physicist or mathematician. Even so, one might have expected better of a man whose title at Oxford is the Charles Simonyi Professor of the Public Understanding of Science. Certainly he and his editors might check such statements with people who know these fields better. His problem, however, is not just with the quantitative sciences. He evinces the same indifference to facts in other areas on which he freely expounds, such as religion. He says, for instance, that a pope's pronouncements on doctrine are based on his personal "revelations," a notion totally at odds with Catholic teaching. He asserts that "the present pope has ordered his followers not to limit the number of babies they have." He cites the Catholic doctrine of the Assumption to rebut the claim that "religion has moved on" and no longer teaches that "God has a long white beard." (His idea seems to be that if people have bodies of some sort in heaven, then so must God. Certainly Dawkins could have learned, without much effort, that Christianity has never held the position, from which it might "move on," that God is corporeal.)

Dawkins' superficiality extends beyond his treatment of facts. What is clear from these essays is that he has not thought very hard, or at any rate very deeply, about many of the important things on which he chooses to write. Had he done so, he might have seen that a number of his ideas are patently inconsistent with one another. This is particularly true of his ideas on the moral implications of Darwinism.

Darwinism as understood by Dawkins necessarily involves a completely naturalistic conception of the world, in which there is no place for God or ultimate

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

purpose. It is plain that this view is incompatible with belief in an objective moral order, and the more clear-thinking atheistic Darwinians have always understood this. One is proscribed by such a philosophy from speaking of the "purposes" of things in any sense that can give rise to moral obligation. A natural object can have a purpose only in the limited sense of a *function* to which its structure suits it, as, for instance, the biological function of an eye is to see. And what is the biological function of an organism? Simply and solely to survive and to propagate its own kind. Natural selection gives nothing beyond that.

None of this yields moral obligation. It is quite meaningless to ask, for example, whether one "should" build a dam that will cause the snail darter to become extinct. We can only ask whether building it would be conducive to human survival, or to snail darter survival, or to some other arbitrarily chosen end. People may, of course, have *feelings* of moral obligation; but only the feelings are real, not the obligations. As Edward O. Wilson and Michael Ruse put it, "human beings function better if they are deceived by their genes into thinking that there is a disinterested objective morality binding upon them, which all should obey."

Given all this, it might seem that Dawkins is simply being consistent when he condemns "speciesism." After all, given his premises, there can be no objective basis for what he calls "absolutist valuings of human life above all other life." Humans may be more important to humans, but snail darters are more important to snail darters. In his essay on the discontinuous mind, Dawkins says that the question "What's so special about humans?" may perhaps have "a powerful answer," but he does not claim to know the answer; his purpose here is to raise the question, because the "unthinking nature of the speciesist double standard" keeps us from even facing the issue of why we should treat other people "better than, say, cows (cows may be cooked and eaten, people may not)." "If we want to justify double standards . . . there must be better reasons than cousinship," because our "cousinship" (with other humans and with chimps, but not with, for instance, the cow and the octopus) is merely "incidental," an accident of evolution. Dawkins suggests that humans may be special because they are brainier, or perhaps because, as Bentham claimed, they can suffer more. But he does not pause to resolve the question, and in the other essays collected here he is unequivocal in his denunciation of prevalent human "speciesism."

All of this may sound like unflinching logical consistency. But if we think a little more deeply than Dawkins does, we realize that moralizing about speciesism is utterly silly from the standpoint of atheistic Darwinism. True, there is no absolute reason to prefer people to cows; but then, there is no absolute reason to prefer anything to anything, including non-speciesism to speciesism. If all moral standards are arbitrary, one might as well go with the speciesist standard. That, at least, has the human organism acting in a way that corresponds to its biological function of survival and propagation. "Cousinship," indeed, is the very best of Darwinian reasons for caring. There is certainly no way to make sense, from a Darwinian perspective, of a trans-species Benthamite calculus of suffering, for that has nothing to do with any organism's fitness for survival.

But haven't we forgotten something? Dawkins has already told us that he is passionately anti-Darwinian when it comes to how we should conduct our human affairs. Indeed. But why should that be? Do we detect here an unthinking speciesist double standard? Why should bovine affairs be conducted on a Darwinian basis, and not human affairs? Cows do not seek to minimize our suffering; why should we seek to minimize theirs? Is it because we alone have the "blessed gift of understanding"? We do, but so what? What is there to understand when it comes to morality? Are there objective moral standards existing somewhere, out there, for our understanding to latch on to? Not on Dawkins' premises. Indeed, he explicitly admits that "science has no methods for deciding what is ethical."

We come down to this: our reason enables us to rebel against the implications of Darwinism. But *why* rebel? Where does the moral standard come from that says we should? Of course, the question is moot. For the fact of the matter is that rebellion against nature is impossible if atheistic Darwinism is true. We are a part of nature and cannot be anything but that. Dawkins thinks he can prove otherwise. He gives the example of contraception as "anti-Darwinian" behavior. But that behavior is no more anti-Darwinian than is a dog chasing a car and getting run over by it. If evolutionary theory is correct, organisms are programmed to respond and to act in ways that *most* of the time, but not invariably, favor their chances to survive and reproduce. Dawkins should really listen to the Devil's Chaplain again: nature is "clumsy, wasteful, blundering."

Dawkins argues against genetic determinism. Given his materialism, it is hard to see the point of this. Whether or not genes decide anything, atoms decide everything. Whether or not there is genetic determinism, there is physical determinism. One does not liberate anybody by throwing open the gates of a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

prison and leaving the inmates locked in their cells. It is of little importance what influence genes or the environment have, or what role is played by individual choices, if in the final analysis everything is just matter anyway, including the genes, the environment, and the individuals who choose. To a materialist, we are just congeries of atoms; and atoms must go whithersoever they are driven by the laws of physics and blind chance. Dawkins wonders whether a child can "escape" the indoctrination of nuns. It is idle of him to wonder. He should know that no one can "escape" anything. There is no place for intellectual or moral freedom in a universe that is mere matter in motion. That is why Sir Francis Crick, Edward O. Wilson, and many others who share Dawkins' basic views call free will an illusion.

Dawkins contrasts ideas that are just memes, mindlessly and slavishly copied from brain to brain like computer viruses, with scientific ideas, which he likens to useful software that is critically evaluated by potential users and adopted or rejected on rational grounds. Such a distinction may be valid, but it is not a distinction that a materialist can make. It is based on there being an essential difference between machines, which can only do as they are told, and intelligent and free users of those machines, who can decide for themselves what to do. In the materialist's universe, however, all users are themselves just machines, and are therefore as much driven by physical necessity (or chance) as everything else is. As the great mathematician and physicist Hermann Weyl observed,

> There must be freedom in the theoretical acts of affirmation and negation: When I reason that 2+2=4, this actual judgment is not forced upon me through blind natural causality (a view that would eliminate thinking as an act for which we can be held answerable) but something purely spiritual enters in.

The inescapable conclusion is that Dawkins and materialists of his sort do not in fact "stand up full-face into the keen wind of understanding." They don't face the implications of their ideas. If they did, they would have to dismiss all talk of morality, rebellion against nature, and intellectual freedom as so much sentimentality.

The same failure to think things through is evident in Dawkins' views on religion. There is nothing in Darwinism, even in its most naturalistic form, that must lead one to despise religion as Dawkins does. There is every indication that religion is natural to man and conducive, on the whole, to his survival. It can give him hope in adversity, strengthen family bonds, and motivate sacrifice for the common good. Dawkins calls it a virus; but if it is, it is one that, according to the latest research, makes us *healthier*. "Faith sufferers," as Dawkins calls them, seem to suffer *less* from a wide array of ills. Among other things, they are less given to depression, anxiety, addiction, criminality, suicide, and divorce. To state these facts is not to preach the prosperity gospel, but to see the weakness of Dawkins' position even on its own naturalistic terms.

Without religion, says Dawkins, we would not have wars of religion or religious persecution. True. And without sex, fathers, families, material possessions, and governments, we would not have sex crimes, abusive fathers, dysfunctional families, greed for material possessions, and oppressive governments. Every natural and necessary thing can be perverted, even reason. Religion has led to hateful ideas, but has any Christian writer ever published ideas as hateful as the social Darwinism of H. G. Wells? Religion has led to persecutions, but none even nearly as massive as those produced by militant irreligion. More people were killed by the "scientific atheism" of communism on an average day than the Spanish Inquisition killed in an average decade. And largely responsible for this fact was a teaching of contempt for religion of exactly the kind that Dawkins propagates.

Dawkins gave an interview to *Belief.net* recently. He was asked whether he could think of anything, just "one positive, if minor, thing" that religion has done for the good. No, he replied, he really couldn't. What about great religious art? "That's not religion," said Dawkins, "it is just because the Church had the money. Great artists like . . . Bach . . . would have done whatever they were told to do." So Johann Sebastian Bach was just in it for the money. What this sordid remark reveals, apart from amazing ignorance and philistinism, is the mind of a true fanatic. It is not enough for Dawkins to say that religion is bad on the whole; it must be wholly bad.

Even without his bigotry, we could not expect balanced judgment or logical consistency from Dawkins, because he is a man in a muddle. One encounters in *A Devil's Chaplain* at least three Dawkinses: there is Dawkins the Humanist, Dawkins the Reasoner, and Dawkins the Darwinist. Each sits on a different branch, sawing away at the branches on which the others sit. Dawkins the Humanist preaches, inveighs, denounces; he bristles with moral indignation. Dawkins the Darwinist tells him, however, that his humanism is speciesist vanity, his moral standards arbitrary, and his indignation empty. Dawkins the Humanist rebels, proclaiming himself (in human

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

affairs) passionately anti-Darwinian. Dawkins the Reasoner joins the rebellion, declaring that our minds allow us to transcend our genetic inheritance. Dawkins the Darwinist answers with lethal effect that our brains "were only designed to understand the mundane details of how to survive in the stone-age African savannah."

The blame for this muddle lies not with humanism, reason, or even Darwinism. It lies with Dawkins' atheism and materialism, which prevent any coherent viewpoint from emerging because they deny the spiritual soul in man. That soul is indeed a blessed gift. It is precisely "what is so special about humans." It is what enables us to be people of reason and not just animals programmed to survive on the African savannah. It is what allows us to grasp moral truth and to have the freedom to follow it rather than the laws of matter or the law of the jungle. It is what makes it possible for us to have that hope and love to which the subtitle of Dawkins' book refers, but which are absent from its pages, and about which he has nothing in the end to say. FT

Bees

Consider how they comb the stiffening air
  in drag-leg flight. Here
and there among the autumn blooms, a few
  persist: slower, somehow
paler, too, as if their black-gold livery
bristled with early frost. There's a bravery
  in doing—
  whatever it is. Showing
the world, which may smile or may not notice,
  that you were born for this
work, this pilgrimage of habit. In brief light,
  from skep to eyebright
  and back again, the bees
perform as bees do, everywhere, always:
  fly, hover, fly
some more, then—unpremeditated—die.

Sally Thomas

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ethics & Life's Ending

An Exchange

Robert D. Orr

Feeding tubes make the news periodically, and controversies over their use or non-use seem unusually contentious. But feeding tubes are not high technology treatment; they are simple, small-bore catheters made of soft synthetic material. Nor are they new technology; feeding tubes were first used in 1793 by John Hunter to introduce jellies, eggs, sugar, milk, and wine into the stomachs of patients unable to swallow. Why does this old, low-tech treatment generate such controversy today? The important question is not whether a feeding tube *can* be used, but whether it *should* be used in a particular situation.

Too often in medicine we use a diagnostic or therapeutic intervention just because it is available. This thoughtless approach is sometimes called the technological imperative, i.e., the impulse to do everything we are trained to do, regardless of the burden or benefit. Kidney failure? Let's do dialysis. Respiratory failure? Let's use a ventilator. Unable to eat? Let's put in a feeding tube. By responding in this way, the physician ignores the maxim "the ability to act does not justify the action." Just because we know how to artificially breathe for a patient in respiratory failure doesn't mean that everyone who cannot breathe adequately must be put on a ventilator. Such a response also represents a failure to do the moral work of assessing whether the treatment is appropriate in a particular situation.

The moral debate about the use or non-use of feeding tubes hinges on three important considerations: the distinction between what in the past was called "ordinary" and "extraordinary" treatments; the important social symbolism of feeding; and a distinction between withholding and withdrawing treatments.

It was recognized many years ago that respirators, dialysis machines, and other high-tech modes of treatment are optional. They could be used or not used depending on the circumstances. However, it was commonly accepted in the past that feeding tubes are generally not optional. Part of the reasoning was that feeding tubes are readily available, simple to use, not very burdensome to the patient, and not very expensive. They were "ordinary treatment" and thus morally obligatory.

For over four hundred years, traditional moral theology distinguished between ordinary and extraordinary means of saving life. Ordinary means were those that were not too painful or burdensome for the patient, were not too expensive, and had a reasonable chance of working. These ordinary treatments were deemed morally obligatory. Those treatments that did involve undue burden were extraordinary and thus optional. This distinction was common knowledge in religious and secular circles, and this language and reasoning was commonly applied in Western society.

As medical treatments became more complicated, it was recognized that this distinction was sometimes not helpful. The problem was that the designation appeared to belong to the treatment itself, rather than to the situation. The respirator and dialysis machine were categorized as extraordinary while antibiotics and feeding tubes were classed as ordinary. But real-life situations were not that simple. Thus began a change in moral terminology first officially noted in the *Declaration on Euthanasia* published in 1980 by the Catholic Church's Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1980: "In the past, moralists replied that one is never obligated to use 'extraordinary' means. This reply, which as a principle still holds good, is perhaps less clear today, by reason of the imprecision of the term and the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rapid progress made in the treatment of sickness. Thus some people prefer to speak of 'proportionate' and 'disproportionate' means."

This newer and clearer moral terminology of proportionality was used in secular ethical analysis as early as the 1983 President's Commission report, *Deciding to Forgo Life-Sustaining Technologies*. The "ordinary/extraordinary" language, however, continues to be seen in the medical literature and heard in the intensive care unit. Reasoning on the basis of proportionality requires us to weigh the burdens and the benefits of a particular treatment for a particular patient. Thus a respirator may be proportionate (and obligatory) for a young person with a severe but survivable chest injury, but it may be disproportionate (and thus optional) for another person who is dying of lung cancer. The same is true for (almost) all medical treatments, including feeding tubes. There are two treatments that always remain obligatory, as I shall explain below.

A second aspect of the discussion about the obligation to provide nutritional support, especially in secular discussions but also in religious debate, was the symbolism of food and water—feeding is caring; nutrition is nurture; food and water are not treatment, and therefore they are never optional. The reasoning commonly went as follows: we provide nutritional support for vulnerable infants because this is an important part of "tender loving care." Shouldn't we provide the same for vulnerable adults as well?

Certainly when a patient is temporarily unable to swallow and has the potential to recover, artificially administered fluids and nutrition are obligatory. Does that obligation change if the prognosis is poor?

This aspect of the debate continued through the 1970s and '80s. It appeared to be resolved by the U.S. Supreme Court in its 1990 decision in *Cruzan v. Director, Missouri Department of Health* when five of the nine Justices agreed that artificially administered fluids and nutrition are medical treatments and are thus optional. Since *Cruzan* medical and legal professions have developed a consensus that feeding tubes are not always obligatory. This debate is ongoing, however, and in some minds the symbolism of feeding remains a dominant feature.

A parallel concern to the symbolism entailed in the use of fluids and nutrition is the commonly heard accusation, "But you will be starving him to death!" when discontinuation of a feeding tube is discussed. This is incorrect. Starvation is a slow process that results from lack of calories and takes several weeks or months. When artificially administered fluids and nutrition are not used in a person who is unable to swallow, that person dies from dehydration, not starvation, and death occurs in five to twelve days. Dehydration is very commonly the last physiologic stage of dying, no matter what the cause.

"But that is no comfort! Being dehydrated and thirsty is miserable." Yes and no. Being thirsty is miserable, but becoming dehydrated need not be. The only place in the body where thirst is perceived is the mouth. There is good empirical evidence that as long as a person's mouth is kept moist, that person is not uncomfortable, even if it is clear that his or her body is becoming progressively dehydrated.

I said earlier that there are two treatments that are never optional: these are good symptom control and human presence. Therefore, when a person is becoming dehydrated as he or she approaches death, it is obligatory to provide good mouth care, along with other means of demonstrating human caring and presence, such as touching, caressing, gentle massage, hairbrushing, talking, reading, and holding.

A third feature of the debate over feeding tubes is the issue of withholding versus withdrawing therapy. Thirty years ago, it was common teaching in medicine that "it is better to withhold a treatment than to withdraw it." The thinking was that if you stop a ventilator or dialysis or a feeding tube, and the patient then dies from this lack of life support, you were the agent of death. Therefore, it would be ethically better not to start the treatment in the first place. Then, if the patient dies, death is attributable to the underlying disease and not to your withdrawal of life support.

Slowly, with help from philosophers, theologians, attorneys, and jurists, the medical profession came to accept that there is no moral or legal difference between withholding and withdrawing a treatment. In fact, it may be ethically better to withdraw life-sustaining treatment than it is to withhold it. If there is a treatment with a very small chance of helping the patient, it is better to give it a try. If it becomes clear after a few days or weeks that it is not helping, then you can withdraw the treatment without the original uncertainty that you might be quitting too soon, and now with the comfort that comes from knowing you are not the agent of death.

However, even if there is no professional, moral, or legal difference, it still may be psychologically more difficult to withdraw a treatment that you know is postponing a patient's death than it would have been not to start it in the first place. Turning down the dials on a ventilator with the expectation that the patient will not survive is more personally unsettling than is merely being present with a patient who is actively dying. Withdrawal of a feeding tube can be even more unsettling, especially if the professional involved has any

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

moral reservations about the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary means, or about the symbolism of artificially administered fluids and nutrition.

Some develop this part of the debate with moral concern about intentionality. They contend that your intention in withdrawing the feeding tube is that the patient will die, and it is morally impermissible to cause death intentionally. In actuality, the intention in withdrawing any therapy that has been proven not to work is to stop postponing death artificially.

With these aspects of the debate more or less settled, where does that leave us in making decisions about the use or non-use of feeding tubes? The short-term use of a feeding tube for a patient who is unable to swallow adequate fluids and nutrition for a few days, because of severe illness or after surgery or trauma, may be lifesaving and is almost always uncontroversial. Such usage may even be morally obligatory when the goal of treatment is patient survival and a feeding tube is the best way to provide needed fluids and nutrition.

A feeding tube is sometimes requested by a loved one as a last-gasp effort to postpone death in a patient who is imminently dying and unable to swallow. This is almost always inappropriate. Good mouth care to maintain patient comfort and hygiene is obligatory, but in such cases maintenance of nutrition is no longer a reasonable goal of treatment. In fact, introduction of fluids may even lead to fluid overload that can cause patient discomfort as the body's systems are shutting down.

The situation that can generate ethical quandaries, front-page news, and conflicts in court is the long-term use of feeding tubes. And these situations are not as neatly segregated into proportionate or disproportionate usage.

Long-term use of a feeding tube remains ethically obligatory for a patient who is cognitively intact, can and wants to survive, but is permanently unable to swallow, an example being a patient who has been treated for malignancy of the throat or esophagus. Protracted use of a feeding tube is also morally required in most instances when it is uncertain whether a patient will regain awareness or recover the ability to swallow—for instance, immediately after a serious head injury or a disabling stroke.

Long-term use of a feeding tube becomes controversial in patients suffering from progressive deterioration of brain function (e.g., Alzheimer's dementia), or in patients with little or no likelihood of regaining awareness after illness or injury (e.g., the permanent vegetative state). Thus, the most perplexing feeding-tube questions involve patients who are unable to take in adequate fluids and nutrition by themselves but who have a condition that by itself will not soon lead to death. The reasoning is: the patient has no fatal condition; he or she can be kept alive with the simple use of tube feedings; therefore we are obligated to use a feeding tube to keep this person alive.

Alzheimer's dementia is the most common type of brain deterioration, afflicting five percent of individuals over sixty-five and perhaps as many as 50 percent of those over eighty-five. It is manifested by progressive cognitive impairment, followed by physical deterioration. This process generally takes several years, often a decade, and is ultimately fatal. In its final stages it almost always interferes with the patient's ability to swallow. Eventually the individual chokes on even pureed foods or liquids. Continued attempts at feeding by mouth very commonly result in aspiration of food or fluid into the airway, frequently leading to pneumonia. Aspiration pneumonia will sometimes respond to antibiotics, but other times it leads to death. Such respiratory infections are the most common final event in this progressive disease.

Feeding tubes have been commonly used in the later stages of Alzheimer's. The reasoning has been that this patient is not able to take in adequate fluids and nutrition and he is not imminently dying. Several assumptions then follow: a feeding tube will improve his comfort, will prevent aspiration pneumonia, and will ensure adequate nutrition which will in turn prevent skin breakdown and thus postpone his death. However, empirical evidence, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1999, has shown each of these assumptions to be incorrect: using a feeding tube in a patient with dementia does not prevent these complications, nor does it prolong life.

In addition, there are several negative aspects to using a feeding tube in a person with advanced cognitive impairment. There are rare complications during insertion, some merely uncomfortable, some quite serious. Having a tube in one's nose is generally uncomfortable; even having one coiled up under a dressing on the abdominal wall can be annoying. Because the demented patient doesn't understand the intended purpose of the feeding tube, he or she may react by trying to remove it, requiring either repeated re-insertions or the use of hand restraints. In addition, using a feeding tube may deprive the patient of human presence and interaction: hanging a bag of nutritional fluid takes only a few seconds, as opposed to the extended time of human contact involved in feeding a cognitively impaired person.

There is a slowly developing consensus in medicine that feeding tubes are generally not appropriate for use in most patients nearing the end stage of Alzheimer's disease. This belief can be supported from a moral

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

standpoint in terms of proportionality. And yet feeding tubes are still rather commonly used. A recently published review of all U.S. nursing home patients with cognitive impairment found that an average of 34 percent were being fed with feeding tubes (though there were large state-to-state variations, from nine percent in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont to 64 percent in Washington, D.C.).

The cases we read about in the newspaper—in which families are divided and court battles fought—most often involve patients in a permanent vegetative state (PVS). This is a condition of permanent unawareness most often caused by severe head injury or by the brain being deprived of oxygen for several minutes. Such deprivation may be the result of successful cardiopulmonary resuscitation of a patient whose breathing or circulation had stopped from a cardiac arrest, near-drowning, strangulation, etc. In a PVS patient, the heart, lungs, kidneys, and other organs continue to function; given good nursing care and artificially administered fluids and nutrition, a person can live in this permanent vegetative state for many years.

A person in a PVS may still have reflexes from the spinal cord (grasping, withdrawal from pain) or the brain stem (breathing, regulation of blood pressure), including the demonstration of sleep-wake cycles. He may "sleep" for several hours, then "awaken" for a while; the eyes are open and wander about, but do not fix on or follow objects. The person in a PVS is "awake, but unaware" because the areas of the upper brain that allow a person to perceive his or her environment and to act voluntarily are no longer functioning.

Some of the clinical controversy about nutritional support for persons in a PVS is due to uncertainty. After a head injury or resuscitation from a cardiac arrest, it may be several weeks or months before a patient can rightly be declared to be in a PVS—months during which the provision of nutritional support via feeding tubes is often very appropriate. Loved ones usually remain optimistic, hoping for improvement, praying for full recovery. The length of time from brain damage to declaration of a PVS can extend, depending on the cause of the brain injury, from one month to twelve months. And just to muddy the waters even further, there are rare instances of delayed improvement after many months or even a few years, so that the previously unaware patient regains some ability to perceive his or her environment, and may even be able to say a few words. These individuals are now in a "minimally conscious state." More than minimal delayed improvement is exceedingly rare. (Treatment decisions for persons in a minimally conscious state are perhaps even more controversial than are those for PVS patients, but that discussion must wait for another time.)

The greatest ethical dilemma surrounding the use or non-use of nutritional support for persons in a PVS arises from the fact that they are not clearly dying. With good nursing care and nutrition, individuals in this condition have survived for up to thirty-five years. Those who advocate continued nutritional support argue thus: this person is alive and not actively or imminently dying; it is possible to keep him alive with minimal effort; this human life is sacred; therefore we are obligated to continue to give artificially administered fluids and nutrition.

It is hard to disagree with the various steps in this line of reasoning. (Some utilitarians do disagree, however, claiming that a patient in a PVS is "already dead" or is a "non-person." Those who believe in the sanctity of life must continue to denounce this line of thought.) Let us stipulate the following: the person in a PVS is alive; he can be kept alive for a long time; his life is sacred. But does the obligation to maintain that severely compromised human life necessarily follow from these premises?

Let's first address the issue of whether he is dying. One could maintain that his physical condition is such that he will die soon but for the artificial provision of fluids and nutrition. Thus the permanent vegetative state could be construed to be lethal in and of itself. However, that fatal outcome is not inevitable since the saving treatment is simple. How does this differ from the imperative to provide nourishment for a newborn who would die without the provision of fluids and nutrition? There are two differences. Most newborns are able to take in nutrition if it is placed in or near their mouths. PVS patients can't swallow, so the nutrition must be delivered further down the gastrointestinal tract. As for sick or premature infants, they have a great potential for improvement, growth, and development. The PVS patient has no such potential.

Rather than a newborn, a better analogy for this aspect of the discussion would be a person with kidney failure. The kidney failure itself is life-threatening, but it is fairly easily corrected by dialysis three times a week. If the person has another condition that renders him unaware of his surroundings, or a condition that makes life a continuous difficult struggle, most would agree that the person is ethically permitted to stop the dialysis even if that means he will not survive. The ultimate cause of death was treatable, so that death could have been postponed, possibly for years. However, other mitigating circumstances may make the dialysis disproportionate, and so one should be allowed to discontinue this death-postponing treatment in a person who is not imminently dying.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Someone coming from a mechanistic perspective can easily and comfortably decide that a person in a PVS with no potential for recovery has no inherent value and is even an emotional drain on loved ones and a financial drain on society. But what about a person of faith? Does the sanctity of life, a basic tenet of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, dictate that life must always be preserved if it is humanly possible to do so? Our moral intuitions tell us the answer is no.

It might be possible to postpone the death of a patient from end-stage heart failure by doing one more resuscitation. It might be possible to postpone the death of someone with end-stage liver disease by doing a liver transplant. It might be possible to postpone the death of someone with painful cancer with a few more blood transfusions or another round of chemotherapy. But these therapies are often not used—because the burden is disproportionate to the benefit. Thus the timing of death is often a matter of choice. In fact, it is commonly accepted that the timing of 80 percent of deaths that occur in a hospital is chosen.

Believers do not like to use the words "choice" and "death" in the same sentence. Doing so recalls acrimonious contests about the "right to life" versus the "right to choose" that are the pivotal point in debates about abortion, assisted suicide, and euthanasia. And certainly belief in the sanctity of human life obligates believers to forgo some choices. But does this belief preclude all choices? No: life is full of difficult choices. This is true for believers and nonbelievers alike. Believers may have more guidance about what choices to make and perhaps some limits on options, but we still are faced with many choices—such as choices about the use or non-use of feeding tubes.

When engaging in moral debate on matters of faith, it is important not to focus exclusively on one tenet of faith to the exclusion of others. In debating the use of feeding tubes—or of any mode of treatment for that matter—one must not ignore the concepts of finitude and stewardship by focusing only on the sanctity of life.

If belief in the sanctity of human life translated automatically into an obligation to preserve each human life at all costs, we would not have to debate proportionate and disproportionate treatments. We would simply be obligated to use all treatments available until they failed to work. However, because of the Fall, human life is finite. All of us will die. Since that is inevitable, God expects us to care wisely for our own bodies and for those of our loved ones, and also for our resources. Healthcare professionals similarly must be wise stewards of their skills and services.

Taking into consideration the scriptural principle of stewardship and the tradition of proportionate treatment, I conclude that there must be some degree of discretion in the use or non-use of feeding tubes. There are clearly situations where a feeding tube must be used. There are other situations where a feeding tube would be morally wrong. But there are many situations where the use of a feeding tube should be optional. And this means that one individual of faith might choose to use a tube when another might choose not to use it.

Because of the patient's personal values, someone might choose to continue artificially administered fluids and nutrition for a loved one in a permanent vegetative state for many years. Another might choose to continue for one year and then to withdraw it if there was no sign of awareness. Still another might choose to stop after three months or one month.

What might those discretionary personal values include? Such things, among others, as an assessment of how to deal with uncertainty, concern about emotional burden on loved ones, and cost of care. Though beliefs in the sanctity of human life and in the obligation to care for vulnerable individuals are not optional for persons of faith, an assessment of whether or not to use a given technology requires human wisdom and thus entails some discretion.

ROBERT D. ORR, M.D. *is the Director of Ethics for Fletcher Allen Health Care and Professor of Family Medicine at the University of Vermont College of Medicine.*

Gilbert Meilaender

There is much to agree with in Robert D. Orr's measured discussion of the moral issues surrounding the use of feeding tubes, there are a few things that seem to me doubtful or in need of clarification, and then there is one major issue that requires greater precision.

It may be useful to note first some claims of Dr. Orr that few would dispute.

- Feeding tubes are a rather low-tech form of care.

- Our ability to do something does not mean that we should do it.

- Any distinction between "ordinary" and "extraordinary" care (if we wish to use that language) cannot simply be a feature of treatments but must be understood as patient-relative. What is ordinary treatment for one patient may be extraordinary for another, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what is ordinary treatment for a patient at one point in his life may become extraordinary at another point when his illness has progressed to a new stage.

• There is no crucial moral difference between withholding or withdrawing a treatment. (Dr. Orr actually writes that there is "no moral or legal difference" between these. The issue of legality is, I suspect, sometimes more complicated, but I take him to be correct insofar as a strictly moral judgment is involved.)

• There are circumstances, some noted by Dr. Orr, in which the use of feeding tubes seems clearly required and is relatively uncontroversial.

• Patients in a persistent vegetative state are not dying patients. (I don't quite know how to combine this with Dr. Orr's statement a few paragraphs later that the permanent vegetative state "could be construed to be lethal in and of itself." In general, I don't think his article ever really achieves clarity and precision on this question, and it will turn out to be a crucial question below.)

• A commitment to the sanctity of human life does not require that we always do everything possible to keep a person alive.

There are also places where Dr. Orr's discussion seems to me to be doubtful or, at least, underdeveloped. Among these are the following:

• The idea that the terms "proportionate" and "disproportionate" are more precise than the (admittedly unsatisfactory) language of "ordinary" and "extraordinary" is, at best, doubtful. On what scale one "weighs" benefits and burdens is a question almost impossible to answer. Even more doubtful is whether we can "weigh" them for someone else. My own view is that when we make these decisions for ourselves, we are not in fact "weighing" anything. We are deciding what sort of person we will be and what sort of life will be ours. We are making not a *discovery* but a *decision*. And if that is true, then it is obvious that we have not discovered anything that could necessarily be transferred and applied to the life of a different patient. In general, the language of "weighing" sounds good, but it is almost impossible to give it any precise meaning.

• No *moral* question was resolved by the Supreme Court's *Cruzan* decision. It established certain legal boundaries, but it did no more than that.

• I suspect that—despite the growing consensus, which Dr. Orr correctly describes—he is too quick to assume that the "symbolism" issue can be dispensed with, and too quick to assume that feeding tubes are "treatment" rather than standard nursing care. A consensus may be mistaken, after all. It is hard to see why such services as turning a patient regularly and giving alcohol rubs are standard nursing care while feeding is not. To take an example from a different realm of life, soldiers are combatants, but the people who grow the food which soldiers eat are not combatants (even though the soldiers could not continue to fight without nourishment). The reason is simple: they make not what soldiers need to fight but what they need, as we all do, in order merely to live. Likewise, we might want to think twice before endorsing the view that relatively low-tech means of providing nourishment are treatment rather than standard nursing care.

• Dr. Orr's discussion of the role of "intention" in moral analysis is, putting it charitably, imprecise. Obviously, if a treatment has been shown not to work, in withdrawing it we do not intend or aim at the patient's death. We aim at caring for that person as best we can, which hardly includes providing treatment that is useless. But the crucial questions will turn on instances in which the treatment is not pointless. If we stop treatment in such cases, it is harder to deny that our aim is that the patient should die.

• Dr. Orr's seeming willingness to allow the state of a patient's cognitive capacities to carry weight—or even be determinative—in treatment decisions is troubling. Obviously, certain kinds of higher brain capacities are characteristics that distinguish human beings from other species; however, one need not have or be exercising those capacities in order to be a living human being. Allowing the cognitive ability of a patient to determine whether he or she is treated will inevitably lead to judgments about the comparative worth of human lives.

• If Dr. Orr is correct in arguing that the use of feeding tubes in end-stage Alzheimer's patients is of no help to those patients and may sometimes be burdensome to them, we would have no moral reason to provide them with tube feeding. This judgment, however, has nothing at all to do with "proportionality." It has to do, simply, with the two criteria we ought to use in making treatment decisions—usefulness and burdensomeness. If a treatment is useless or excessively burdensome, it may rightly be refused.

This brings us to the most difficult issue, which clearly troubles Dr. Orr himself, and which is surely

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

puzzling for all of us: the patient in a persistent vegetative state. We cannot usefully discuss this difficult case, however, without first getting clear more generally on the morality of withholding or withdrawing treatment. As I noted above, on this issue the language of proportionality is unlikely to be of much use for serious moral reflection.

At least for Christians—though, in truth, also much more generally for our civilization's received medical tradition—we begin with what is forbidden. We should never aim at the death of a sick or dying person. (Hence, euthanasia, however good the motive, is forbidden.) Still, there are times when treatment may rightly be withheld or withdrawn, *even though* the patient may then die more quickly than would otherwise have been the case. How can that be? How can it be that, as a result of our decision, the patient dies more quickly, yet we do not aim at his death?

This is quite possible—and permissible—so long as we aim to dispense with the treatment, not the life. No one need live in a way that seeks to ensure the longest possible life. (Were that a moral requirement, think of all the careers that would have to be prohibited.) There may be many circumstances in which we foresee that decisions we make may shorten our life, but we do not suppose that in so deciding we are aiming at death or formulating a plan of action that deliberately embraces death as a good. So in medical treatment decisions the question we need to answer is this: Under what circumstances may we rightly refuse a life-prolonging treatment without supposing that, in making this decision, we are doing the forbidden deed of choosing or aiming at death?

The answer of our medical-moral tradition has been the following: we may refuse treatments that are either *useless* or *excessively burdensome*. In doing so, we choose not death, but one among several possible lives open to us. We do not choose to die, but, rather, how to live, even if while dying, even if a shorter life than some other lives that are still available for our choosing. What we take aim at then, what we refuse, is not life but treatment—treatment that is either useless for a particular patient or excessively burdensome for that patient. Especially for patients who are irretrievably into the dying process, almost all treatments will have become useless. In refusing them, one is not choosing death but choosing life without a now useless form of treatment. But even for patients who are not near death, who might live for a considerably longer time, excessively burdensome treatments may also be refused. Here again, one takes aim at the burdensome treatment, not at life. One person may choose a life that is longer but carries with it considerable burden of treatment. Another may choose a life that is shorter but carries with it less burden of treatment. Each, however, chooses life. Neither aims at death.

It is essential to emphasize that these criteria refer to treatments, not to lives. We may rightly reject a treatment that is useless. But if I decide not to treat because I think a person's life is useless, then I am taking aim not at the treatment but at the life. Rather than asking, "What if anything can I do that will benefit the life this patient has?" I am asking, "Is it a benefit to have such a life?" If the latter is my question, and if I decide not to treat, it should be clear that it is the life at which I take aim. Likewise, we may reject a treatment on grounds of excessive burden. But if I decide not to treat because it seems a burden just to have the life this person has, then I am taking aim not at the burdensome treatment but at the life. Hence, in deciding whether it is appropriate and permissible to withhold or withdraw treatment—whether, even if life is thereby shortened, we are aiming only at the treatment and not at the life—we have to ask ourselves whether the treatment under consideration is, for this patient, either useless or excessively burdensome.

Against that background, we can consider the use of feeding tubes for patients in a persistent vegetative state. (I set aside here the point I noted above—that we might want to regard feeding simply as standard nursing care rather than as medical treatment. Now we are asking whether, even on the grounds that govern treatment decisions, we have good moral reason not to feed patients in a persistent vegetative state.)

Is the treatment useless? Not, let us be clear, is the life a useless one to have, but is the treatment useless? As Dr. Orr notes—quite rightly, I think—patients "can live in this permanent vegetative state for many years." So feeding may preserve for years the life of this living human being. Are we certain we want to call that useless? We are, of course, tempted to say that, in deciding not to feed, we are simply withdrawing treatment and letting these patients die. Yet, as Dr. Orr also notes, these patients "are not clearly dying." And, despite the sloppy way we sometimes talk about these matters, you cannot "let die" a person who is not dying. It is hard, therefore, to make the case for treatment withdrawal in these cases on the ground of uselessness. We may use those words, but it is more likely that our target is a (supposed) useless life and not a useless treatment. And if that is our aim, we had better rethink it promptly.

Is the treatment excessively burdensome? Alas, if these patients could experience the feeding as a burden, they would not be diagnosed as being in a persis-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tent vegetative state. We may wonder, of course, whether having such a life is itself a burden, but, again, if that is our reasoning, it will be clear that we take aim not at a burdensome treatment but at a (presumed) burdensome life. And, once more, if that is our aim, we had better rethink it promptly.

Hence, although these are troubling cases, Dr. Orr has not given us good or sufficient arguments to make the case for withdrawing feeding tubes from patients in a persistent vegetative state. I have not suggested that we have an obligation always and at any cost to preserve life. I have simply avoided all comparative judgments of the worth of human lives and have turned aside from any decisions which, when analyzed carefully, look as if they take aim not at a dispensable treatment but at a life. "Choosing life" does not mean doing whatever is needed to stay alive as long as possible. But choosing life clearly means never aiming at another's death—even if only by withholding treatment. I am not persuaded that Dr. Orr has fully grasped or delineated what it means to choose life in the difficult circumstances he discusses.

GILBERT MEILAENDER *is a member of the President's Council on Bioethics. The views expressed here are his own and do not represent the Council.*

Les Trois Miracles de Sainte-Cécile:

Fragments

She is a gentle virgin—
  A sparrow,
A rose, a fountain,
  A frail echo.

She is a pure virgin—
  a verdant branch;
She walks, demure and candid,
  An open book.

She is a pensive maiden,
  A skein,
A key, a ring,
  A casket closed.

She is a noble virgin
  With Roman brow,
The simple drapery
  Of a flowing robe.

She is Cecile, the boundary
  Of a great past,
The vessel that conceals
  A sacred honey.

Henri Ghéon
translated from the French
by Elenor Loarie Schoen

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Capital Punishment: The Case for Justice

J. Budziszewski

Justice is giving each what is due to him. So fundamental is the duty of public authority to requite good and evil in deeds that natural law philosophers consider it the paramount function of the state, and the New Testament declares that the role is delegated to magistrates by God Himself. "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution," says St. Peter, "whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right" (1 Peter 2: 13-14). St. Paul agrees:

> For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute His wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience (Romans 13:3-5).

So weighty is the duty of justice that it raises the question whether mercy is permissible at all. By definition, mercy is punishing the criminal less than he deserves, and it does not seem clear at first why not going far enough is any better than going too far. We say that both cowardice and rashness miss the mark of courage, and that both stinginess and prodigality miss the mark of generosity; why do we not say that both mercy and harshness miss the mark of justice? Making matters yet more difficult, the argument to abolish capital punishment is an argument to *categorically* extend clemency to *all* those whose crimes are of the sort that would be requitable by death.

I ask: Is there warrant for such categorical extension of clemency? Let us focus mainly on the crime of murder, the deliberate taking of innocent human life. The reason for this focus is that the question of mercy arises only on the assumption that some crime does deserve death. It would seem that at least death deserves death, that nothing less is sufficient to answer the gravity of the deed. As Scripture says: "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image" (Genesis 9: 5-6). Someone may object that the murderer, too, is made in God's image, and so he is. But this does not lighten the horror of his deed. On the contrary, it heightens it, because it makes him a morally accountable being. Moreover, if even simple murder warrants death, how much more does multiple and compounded murder warrant it. Some criminals seem to deserve death many times over. If we are considering not taking their lives at all, the motive cannot be justice. It must be mercy.

The questions we must address are therefore three: Is it ever permissible for public authority to give the wrongdoer less than he deserves? If it is permissible, then when is it permissible? Is it permissible to grant such mercy categorically?

J. Budziszewski *is Professor of Government and Philosophy at the University of Texas at Austin. This article is adapted from a chapter of* A Call for Reckoning: Religion and the Death Penalty, *edited by John Carlson, Eric Elshtain, and Erik Owens, to be published this fall by Eerdmans.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Society is justly ordered when each person receives what is due to him. Crime disturbs this just order, for the criminal takes from people their lives, peace, liberties, and worldly goods in order to give himself undeserved benefits. Deserved punishment protects society morally by restoring this just order, making the wrongdoer pay a price equivalent to the harm he has done. This is retribution, not to be confused with revenge, which is guided by a different motive. In retribution the spur is the virtue of indignation, which answers injury with injury for public good. In revenge the spur is the passion of resentment, which answers malice with malice for private satisfaction. We are not concerned here with revenge.

Retribution is the primary purpose of just punishment as such. The reasons for saying so are threefold. First, just punishment is not something which might or might not requite evil; requital is simply what it is. Second, without just punishment evil cannot be requited. Third, just punishment requires no warrant beyond requiting evil, for the restoration of justice is good in itself. True, just punishment may bring about other good effects. In particular, it might rehabilitate the criminal, physically protect society from him, or deter crime in general. Although these might be additional motives for just punishment, they are secondary. In the first place, punishment might not achieve them. In the second place, they can sometimes be partly achieved apart from punishment. Third and most important, they cannot justify punishment by themselves. In other words, we *may not do more* to the criminal than he deserves—not even if more would be needed to rehabilitate him, make him harmless, or discourage others from imitation. For example, if a man punches another man in the nose, we may not keep him in a mental institution forever just because he has not yet become kind in spirit, kill him because we cannot be sure that he will never punch again, or torture him because nothing less would deter other would-be punchers. For these reasons, rehabilitation, protection, and deterrence have a lesser status in punishment than retribution: they are secondary.

The argument against capital punishment runs as follows. True, the purpose of retribution is served by the murderer's death, but under certain circumstances retribution might interfere with other purposes of punishment: it might prematurely put an end to his rehabilitation; it might undermine deterrence (say, by so angering his compatriots that they, too, commit evils); and it might not be necessary for the physical safety of others. Therefore, it would be better not to kill him, but to protect society by other means—perhaps by locking him up forever. The difficulty with this argument is that it seems to regard the secondary purposes of punishment as sufficient to overturn its primary purpose. Rehabilitation, protection, and deterrence cannot justify doing more than what retribution demands; how can they justify doing less?

Fortunately, this is not the end of the story; mercy and justice can, in fact, be reconciled. Let me first consider a false ending to the story that makes their reconciliation seem simpler than it is. This false ending comes from the utilitarian philosophy that permeates our society and legal culture.

To the question, "Is it ever permissible to show mercy?" the utilitarian answers "yes," but it is a misleading "yes" because he does not understand what is being asked. A utilitarian says that the only reason to have laws at all is to stop things that make people feel pain and start things that make them feel pleasure. Requiting wrong just because it is wrong will make no sense to him because he does not believe in intrinsic wrong; if someone chides him, "Never do evil that good may result," he is confused, because what results is the only measure of evil that he has. He cannot distinguish retribution from revenge, viewing all punishment merely as an emotional venting which makes people feel better. Not that he objects to it on that account, for in his view, feeling good is all that matters. Over time, though, rehabilitation, protection, and deterrence can make people feel better, too, so the only question is what combination of punishment and remission of punishment makes people feel the best. Therefore, the utilitarian might very well do less to the criminal than he deserves—but, for the same reason, the utilitarian might do more to the criminal than he deserves, for the utilitarian does not grasp the concept of desert.

To the question, "Is it ever permissible to show mercy?" I also answer "yes," but for a different reason. The faith I hold recognizes the dilemma that utilitarians ignore. Justice is inexorable; evil must be punished. This would seem to make mercy impossible; yet there is mercy. As the Psalmist says, "Great is thy mercy, O Lord; give me life according to thy justice" (Psalms 119:156). Somehow the irreconcilables meet and kiss.

How can this be? There are two parts to the riddle, one on God's side, the other on man's. On the divine side, the reconciliation of justice with mercy lies in the Cross. God does not balance mercy and justice; He accomplishes both to the full. The reason He can remit punishment to human beings who repent and turn to Him is that Christ, the Lamb of God, has taken the punishment in their place. His death and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

resurrection become their death and resurrection, because he identifies with them through sacrifice and they identify with him through faith; the judge himself steps forward to pay their debt. Divine mercy, then, means two things. One is the divine atonement which makes God's forgiveness possible. The other is the divine patience with which He waits for us to ask for His forgiveness.

Yet whom God loves, He disciplines. For our good, not even divine forgiveness means that the consequences of sin in this life are fully remitted. Among these consequences is punishment by human magistrates, who act as God's agents whether they know it or not. The sentences of human magistrates cannot be, and are not meant to be, a final requital of unrepented evil; that awaits the great day when Christ returns to judge the quick and the dead. But they foreshadow that final justice, so that something of the retributive purpose is preserved. In the meantime they promote restraint, repentance, and amendment of life. Human magistrates turn out to be not plenary but partial delegates, and not only of God's wrath but also of His patience.

All this puts the primary and secondary purposes of punishment more nearly on a level than they would be otherwise—not for God, but for man. Although human magistrates are forbidden to let crimes go unrequited, they do not carry the impossible burden of requiting them to the last degree. For temporal purposes, the retributive purpose of punishment can be moderated by its other three purposes after all. The only purpose which cannot be moderated is the purpose of symbolizing that perfect retribution which magistrates themselves do not achieve, for human punishment is a sign of wrath to come.

If criminals in general can sometimes be punished less than they deserve, then perhaps capital criminals can sometimes be punished less than they deserve. The desideratum is when the purposes of punishment can be satisfied better by bloodless means than by bloody ones, so let us consider the four purposes one by one.

Rehabilitation refers to the reconciliation of the criminal with man and God. It may seem at first that capital punishment can never aid in rehabilitation, because when the string of life is cut the process of rehabilitation is cut off, too. But this is overstated. One part of rehabilitation is cut off, for certainly a dead man is not readmitted to society. But what do the opponents of capital punishment propose as an alternative? For serious crimes and dangerous criminals, they propose life imprisonment, but a man in jail for life does not return to society either. The real question is not what the prospect of death does to a man's prospect of readmission to society, but what it does to his prospect of change of heart. Here the picture is quite different. "Depend upon it, Sir," said Samuel Johnson, "when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully." Indeed, there may be many criminals for whom nothing else concentrates the mind enough. By contrast, an offender who is confined in jail for life with no society but that of other criminals is probably more likely to be hardened than reformed. We are forced to conclude that in some cases, the death penalty may contribute to rehabilitation rather than hinder it.

Protection refers to the defense of society from the criminal. The restoration of just order is by its very nature a moral protection of society, but there is much to be said even if we consider only physical protection. Some people suggest that although capital punishment might once have been necessary for protection, modern improvements in the penal system make it possible to shield the innocent without killing the guilty. Such indeed is the argument of Pope John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae*, although he states the conclusion in less categorical terms. It is the more categorical form of the conclusion to which I object. What the Pope suggests is that today we may be able to sentence a criminal to life imprisonment with the reasonable certainty that he will not be able to escape. I agree that this is a deeply significant change which may ultimately reduce the weight of the safety question in cases where clemency has been proposed. However, I do not agree that it has reduced its weight already. Today the risk is not so much that dangerous and justly judged criminals will escape from prison; the risk is that we will let them out. It has been a long time since a "life sentence" meant that the prisoner would stay in prison for the rest of his natural life.

There are several reasons for the erosion of life sentencing, and they tend to compound each other. High crime rates have so swelled the number of inmates that officials find it difficult to feed and house all of them; the pressure to set some free is hard to resist. At the same time, American society finds it increasingly difficult to take right and wrong seriously. Not only does our lax moral attitude contribute further to the high rate of crime, but it generates further pressure to let criminals out of prison. When we do let them out, they are usually more dangerous than when they entered, because of the tips they have learned, the contacts they have made, and the attitudes they have developed among other criminals. The argument is sometimes made that abolishing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

capital punishment would foster the virtue of compassion. Conceivably this is so, but in the present moral climate it is more likely to foster that counterfeit compassion which thinks no wrong is very wrong. Should this happen, then society would be even more at risk than it is now.

Suppose the unlikely: that somehow we did keep all capital criminals in prison for the duration of their natural lives. Even then the protective purpose of punishment would not be fully satisfied. True, a man behind bars no longer endangers society in general. But he endangers other inmates, and he certainly endangers prison staff. Surely they, too, deserve consideration. We are forced to conclude that even today, with our modern penal systems, safety is still an issue. Safety must not trump desert: the risk of future harm to society cannot justify doing *more* to the criminal than he deserves. But in some cases it should keep us from doing less.

Deterrence refers to the discouragement of crime in general. This is where some opponents of capital punishment claim their strongest ground, for the statistical evidence for the deterrent effect of capital punishment is inconsistent and inconclusive. Avery Cardinal Dulles has suggested a further dilemma. (See "Catholicism & Capital Punishment," FT April 2001). Although grotesque and torturous methods of execution seem most likely to deter, they are incompatible with human dignity. Conversely, those methods of execution which are compatible with human dignity seem unlikely to deter. So for the means of capital punishment which could actually be used, we probably could not count on a deterrent effect.

For those who view deterrence as the primary purpose of punishment, the uncertainty of capital punishment as a deterrent provides the fatal argument against it. For those who view its primary purpose as retribution, however, this uncertainty makes little difference; the mere fact that a deserved punishment does not deter makes it no less richly deserved. But is it possible that high rates of capital punishment would actually undermine deterrence, inciting wicked and resentful men to greater evils? We know that banning a favorite vice can have this effect; the prohibition of alcohol, for example, can give drunkenness a certain glamour. But the crimes we class as capital must be prohibited in any case. If there were evidence that punishing them by execution rather than by bloodless means incited them, that would certainly be an argument for using the bloodless means. To my knowledge, however, no such evidence has turned up. It seems, then, that the data on deterrence neither strengthen nor weaken the case for capital punishment.

Retribution. We saw earlier that, although human punishment does not bear the full burden of requiting good and evil, it must hold up requital as an ideal; it must point beyond itself, to that perfect justice of which it is merely a token. Cardinal Dulles agrees, but he sees a problem:

> For the symbolism to be authentic, the society must believe in the existence of a transcendent order of justice, which the state has an obligation to protect. This has been true in the past, but in our day the state is generally viewed simply as an instrument of the will of the governed. In this modern perspective, the death penalty expresses not the divine judgment on objective evil but rather the collective anger of the group. The retributive goal of punishment is misconstrued as a self-assertive act of vengeance.

The cynicism which Cardinal Dulles describes is a real and grave difficulty. In general, our ruling class no longer believes in those divine decrees of which human decrees are but a hint or shadow, and neither does a large and growing part of the population. More and more our intellectuals agree with the famous statement of Oliver Wendell Holmes that "truth is the majority vote of that nation that could lick all others."

But what is the import of these facts? They do not make it *less* important for our courts to appeal to justice; they make it *more* important. There is a difference between saying that the ideology people hold no longer gives adequate expression to the law which St. Paul says is "written on their hearts" (Romans 2:14-15), and saying, instead, that it is not in fact written on their hearts. Even now, people retain a dim idea of desert; the idea "A deserves B for doing C" has not simply become meaningless to them. The Roman judges of the first century were no less cynical than the American judges of the twenty-first. Tiberius Caesar would have been quite comfortable with Holmes' maxim; Pontius Pilate washed his hands of justice, using the question "What is truth?" not to begin the interview with his prisoner but to end it. The apostles knew all these things, yet St. Paul calls the magistrate the servant of God to execute divine wrath on the wrongdoer.

I do not know whether our society can be brought back to believe in a transcendent order of justice, but of this I am certain: if we who recognize this standard do not act as though we believe in it, then no one will be brought by us to believe in it.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The question to ask about the retributive purpose of capital punishment is this: Is it possible for punishment to signify the gravity of crimes which deserve death if their perpetrators are never visited with execution? This seems unlikely. Consider the deviant who tortures small children to death for his pleasure or the ideologue who meditates the demise of innocent thousands for the sake of greater terror. Genesis says murderers deserve death *because* life is precious; man is made in the image of God. How convincing is our reverence for life if its mockers are suffered to live?

Let us consider what objections might be made against our argument to this point. The judicious Cardinal Dulles, to whom my discussion is already indebted, finds less to commend capital punishment than I do. Yet even he does not think that a review of the purposes of punishment is sufficient in itself to justify abolishing the ultimate penalty. The crux of his published argument is found not there, but in four other common objections to the penalty of death. (1) Sometimes innocent people are sentenced to death. (2) Capital punishment whets the lust for revenge rather than satisfying the zeal for true justice. (3) It cheapens the value of life. (4) And it contradicts Christ's teaching to forgive. The Cardinal calls the first objection "relatively strong," to the second and third he concedes "some probable force," and the fourth he considers "relatively weak." Yet he concludes that "taken together, the four may suffice to tip the scale against the death penalty." Let us revisit these four objections.

Erroneous convictions. Courts sometimes do mistakenly condemn the innocent. Although erroneous conviction is possible in any case, its gravity increases with the severity and irreversibility of the penalty. It would seem that the proper remedy is to require a higher procedural standard in capital cases than in ordinary cases, and to root out the sources of corruption in the system of justice. Indeed, the Cardinal acknowledges the point, approving the suggestion that capital punishment would be justified if the trial were held in an honest court and the accused were found guilty "beyond all shadow of doubt." His point is that this criterion cannot be satisfied, for despite all precautions, errors do sometimes occur.

The difficulty with the argument lies in the notion of guilt "beyond all shadow of doubt." When we say this, do we mean beyond shadow of any sort of doubt, or do we mean beyond shadow of reasonable doubt? In law, the latter standard rules, and surely this is as it ought to be. Anything *might* be doubted, but it does not follow that doubt is always justified by the facts in evidence. The murderer might have told the grocer, doctor, and cabdriver what he was going to do; he might have been videotaped doing it by a newsman, a passerby, and an automatic security camera; he might have boasted about it afterward to a coworker, bartender, and next-door neighbor; and he might have confessed, in the presence of his lawyer, to the arresting officer, the investigating officers, and the court. Yet perhaps someone on the jury has been reading the *Meditations* of René Descartes and is troubled by the possibility that the sensible world is only an illusion caused by an evil demon or by the nature of minds. If it is, the juror reasons, then none of the witnesses can be trusted. For that matter, neither can the accused; he may have only dreamed the whole murder. True, Descartes concludes that the world is not an illusion after all. But the juryman votes for acquittal anyway, reflecting that philosophers sometimes err.

Now the way that the juryman reasons about philosophers is very much like how Cardinal Dulles reasons about juries. The Cardinal holds that because even honest courts can err, we must not trust any verdict, irrespective of the weight of evidence which supports it. But a doubt which cannot be affected by any possible evidence is not a reasonable ground for letting a convict off the hook.

The lust for revenge. Of course it is true that the death penalty might whet the appetite for revenge. It is hard to see, though, why this should be more true of the death penalty than of "locking them up for life." Indeed it is hard to see why it should be more true of punishment than of the other aspects of criminal justice. Seeing policemen on the streets, hearing the testimony of witnesses in court, hearing the judge's solemn charge to the jury—all of these things might whet the appetite for revenge, and no doubt they often do. Should we then abolish policemen, testimony, and solemn charges? Moreover, not only can the love of justice be twisted toward the wrong, but every good impulse can be twisted toward the wrong: love of country, love of family, compassion for those who suffer. The first may be distorted into jingoism, the second into nepotism, the third into sentimentality. Even the love of God can be perverted, and when it is, it is a terrible thing indeed. Yet the fact that something right can be perverted does not stop it from being right.

The cheapening of life. Cardinal Dulles paraphrases the standard argument this way: "By giving the impression that human beings sometimes have the right to kill, [capital punishment] fosters a casual attitude toward evils such as abortion, suicide, and euthanasia." The Cardinal does not consider this

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

argument strong. In particular, he observes that many earnest opponents of these other deeds are earnest supporters of capital punishment, for they realize that the rights of the guilty and innocent are not the same. He is quite right, and we can pair his observation with another. Many fervent supporters of these other deeds are also fervent opponents of capital punishment. The phenomenon is as common as it is strange. Perhaps it is a form of compensation, as conscience demands its pay: having approved the private execution of the weak and blameless, one now seeks absolution by denouncing the official execution of the strong and ruthless. Whether or not this explains it, two things at least are plain. First, it is psychologically possible to hold either of the following combinations of positions: that it is wrong to kill the innocent but may be right to kill the guilty, and that it is wrong to kill the guilty but may be right to kill the innocent. Second, the normal moral reason for upholding capital punishment is reverence for life itself. Indeed, this is the reason why Scripture and Christian tradition uphold it, a fact which suggests that if anything, it is the *abolition* of capital punishment which threatens to cheapen life.

Christ's teaching on forgiveness. It is true that Jesus taught us to love those who hate us, forgive those who wrong us, and abstain from hypocritical comparisons between ourselves and those who offend us. These things we should do, however difficult they may be. But let us remember that the same Lord and God who commands His people to pardon their debtors also gave them Torah, which commands magistrates to call them to account. Cardinal Dulles speaks rightly when he says that "personal pardon does not absolve offenders from their obligations in justice." Indeed, he considers this fourth objection "relatively weak" and "complex at best." My only objection to these words is that they are too polite, for the supposition that personal forgiveness implies a requirement for universal amnesty is not merely weak but mistaken. Taken seriously, it would destroy all public authority, for if punishment *as such* is incompatible with forgiveness, then why stop with capital punishment? Must we not abolish prisons, fines, and even reprimands as well?

I have heard it asked by fellow Christians, "How dare we play God? How dare we wrest into our own hands the divine prerogative of life and death?" It is a good question. My answer is that we dare not. We dare not wrest into our own hands *any* of the divine prerogatives of justice, whether the deprivation of life, of liberty, or of property. It is a dreadful matter to kill a man, but it is also dreadful to lock him in a hole, away from wife, children, parents, friends, and all that he held dear in life. It is a fearsome matter to imprison a man, but it is also fearsome to use fines and impoundments to confiscate his worldly goods, which he may have accumulated by honest labor and is counting on for the succor of his family and the support of his declining years. No, we dare not wrest into our hands any powers over our fellow men. But if God *puts* such powers into the hands of those who hold public authority—what then? Does this not alter the picture? How dare we jerk our hands away, hide them behind our backs, refuse the charge. For the teaching of Scripture and Christian tradition are just as clear about public justice as they are about personal forgiveness, and the teaching of Christ is that "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). The magistrate is "sent," whether he knows it or not; he is "the servant of God to execute His wrath on the wrongdoer." Yes, we have seen that he is a servant of God's patience, too, but the one charge does not cancel the other. However tempered with mercy, public authority remains an augur or a portent of the wrath which will one day fall upon the unrepentant.

The story has another side as well. To remit deserved punishment too easily is a miscarriage not only of justice but also of mercy. When a heart is very hard, it may sometimes be the case that deserved punishment is the only knock strong enough to break the husk and spill out the seeds of repentance. God Himself is said to use this method: those whom He loves, He chastens, even perhaps with the prospect of death. If we are to imitate His love, then we must sometimes imitate His chastening, too.

Our brief review of the objections to capital punishment has led us to the following conclusion. First, in considering whether to grant clemency, the proper question is not whether juries ever err, but whether we have reasonable ground to think that *this particular* jury has erred in fact. Second, any deserved punishment, indeed any element of justice, might whet the impulse for revenge. But when a good impulse is perverted, we should fight not the impulse but its perversion; and so with the impulse for justice. Third, Scripture and Christian tradition uphold capital punishment not in contempt for life but in reverence for it. It is *because* man is made in God's image that Torah decrees that whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed. Fourth, Christ did teach personal forgiveness, but he never challenged the need for public justice. Official pardon rightly has conditions which personal forgiveness does not. Not only is punishment compatible with love, it is sometimes demanded by it as the only medicine strong enough to do the offender good.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Classically, Christian teaching has held that the state has the authority to inflict capital punishment. It has also classically held that in certain cases a deserved punishment of death may be remitted but that the grounds for possible clemency are particular, not universal. Categorical remission of the penalty for all whose crimes deserve death contradicts revealed teaching on the duty of the magistrate and has no warrant in Christian tradition. It would weaken three of the four purposes of punishment, would confuse the good counsels of compassion, and would bring about more harm than good. What, then, of *Evangelium Vitae*? I accept the conclusion of John Paul II that "today" cases in which the death penalty is still necessary are "very rare, if not practically nonexistent." However, we must resist the tendency to exaggerate his conclusion by reading these six words as the single word "nonexistent."

Some say that because there is a risk of error in both directions, we should prefer to err on the side of mercy. I agree. We should indeed prefer to err on the side of mercy, in individual cases. But to err *categorically* is not simply to make a mistake. It is to abdicate our duty. FT

At Arlington

Two dates carved in stone above his grave
tell us he was seventeen, not how
this soldier died, nor whether he was brave
or terrified, or both. No matter now:
the only life he had to give, he gave.

Wiley Clements

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Christ and Critical Theory

Paul J. Griffiths

The current condition of cultural theory should evoke Christian pity and concern. Cultural theorists today lack the theoretical resources necessary for interesting intellectual work; and they are nostalgic for a lost golden age (the 1960s and some of the '70s) in which those resources seemed to be both available and usable for the transformation of society. That the pathos of this condition is evident to those inside the discipline as well as to those outside is suggested by the increasing number of histories of the theoretical excitements of the past forty years with mournful titles like Terry Eagleton's *After Theory* (2004). It is also suggested by the frequency with which cultural theorists are now turning to analysis and exposition of the conceptual resources and classic texts of Christianity as prompts and supports for their own work. This should not surprise Christians: our intellectual tradition is long-lived, rich, and subtle, and any attempt by European thinkers to do without it is not likely to last. But there is more to this renewed interest in Christianity by cultural critics, I think, and the best word for that extra element is "yearning."

Forty years or so ago, somewhere around Philip Larkin's *annus mirabilis* of 1963 ("Between the end of the 'Chatterley' ban/And the Beatles' first LP"), new theoretical movements began to stir in Europe. They began in grand style, growing out of (and in part rejecting) the formalistic structuralism of Ferdinand de Saussure (in linguistics), Claude Lévi-Strauss (in anthropology), and Roman Jakobson (in literary theory). To this they married the new Marxism of the postwar European left, for which Walter Benjamin, Antonio Gramsci, Max Horkheimer, and Theodor Adorno were numinous figures; and, as political excitements grew more intense in France, those manning the barricades in 1968 were often also the high priests (Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Louis Althusser, Jacques Lacan) of these new theoretical movements, now beginning to be called postmodern and post-structuralist, and soon to spawn yet more offspring: new historicism, post-colonialism, subaltern studies, and, eventually and most broadly, cultural theory, which is now becoming the preferred label in the American university for the humanities in general.

The "culture" in "cultural theory" can mean just about anything. By the 1980s it included, as Terry Eagleton puts it, "pleasure, desire, arts, language, the media, the body, gender, ethnicity." Also—and here the transformation of structuralism is most obvious—cultural phenomena begin to be treated as local performances, bereft of universal norms, solid foundations, meta-narratives, objective knowledge, and rigid identities. Cultural theorists began, as the 1970s progressed, to favor the margins over the center, the transgressive over the conservative, the fluid over the stable, the particular over the general, and the popular over the elite. The totalizing narrative, the complete theory, the desire to explain everything—these became increasingly suspect; and that suspicion was directed indiscriminately at Marxism and (when it was considered at all) at Christianity.

Along with that suspicion went a gradual dilution of the properly political passions, and this dilution was hastened by the symbolic contrast between Paris in 1968 and Berlin in 1989. In the former, revolution

Paul J. Griffiths *is Schmitt Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. His latest book is* Lying: An Augustinian Theology of Duplicity *(Brazos Press).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seemed possible: the grand theorists of the time had not yet separated their theoretical work from attention to political and social injustice, and they were almost without exception Marxists or Maoists or both at once. The events of 1968 in Paris seemed to signal a natural affinity between political revolution and a post-structuralism on the brink of cultural studies. Everything, it seemed, could be made new. But as the wall came down in Berlin in 1989, socialist revolution seemed no longer possible: cultural studies had lost its political fervor (though not its libidinal interests: the publication of Jean-François Lyotard's *Économie libidinale* in 1974 is a marker for this transition), and grand theory of the classical Marxist kind became harder and harder seriously to defend. Cultural theory in the United States is now practiced almost entirely within the walls of the university, and although it can still make revolutionary sounds—hollow talk about the marginalized and the oppressed is constant—the revolution it has in mind is sought only in the achievements of curriculum-reform committees.

Terry Eagleton tells this story well, and with a schadenfreude-laced gloom: for him it is a narrative of decline, and he serves as my first instance of a cultural theorist's Christian yearnings, and as a teller, from the inside, of an important part of the story that explains those yearnings. Eagleton is a working-class Englishman of Irish extraction, born in Salford (one of Northern England's more depressing places) in 1943, and now Professor of English and Cultural Theory at the University of Manchester. He is Catholic in the sense that he was baptized, educated,

Books Discussed in This Essay

AFTER THEORY. By TERRY EAGLETON. *Basic Books. 256 pp. $25.*

THE GATEKEEPER: A MEMOIR. By TERRY EAGLETON. *St. Martin's Press. 192 pp. $19.95.*

SAINTS AND SCHOLARS. By TERRY EAGLETON. *Verso, 1987.*

FIGURES OF DISSENT. By TERRY EAGLETON. *Verso. 224 pp. $25.*

ÉCONOMIE LIBIDINALE. By JEAN-FRANÇOIS LYOTARD. *Éditions de Minuit, 1974. Translated into English as* LIBIDINAL ECONOMY. *Indiana University Press. 275 pp. $22.95 paper.*

LA CONDITION POSTMODERNE: RAPPORT SUR LE SAVOIR. By JEAN-FRANÇOIS LYOTARD. *Éditions de Minuit, 1979. Translated into English as* THE POSTMODERN CONDITION: A REPORT ON KNOWLEDGE. *University of Minnesota Press. 110 pp. $16.95 paper.*

LE DIFFÉREND. By JEAN-FRANÇOIS LYOTARD. *Éditions de Minuit, 1983. Translated into English as* THE DIFFÉREND: PHRASES IN DISPUTE. *University of Minnesota Press. 208 pp. $17.95 paper.*

LEÇONS SUR L'ANALYTIQUE DU SUBLIME. By JEAN-FRANÇOIS LYOTARD. *Éditions Galilee, 1991. Translated into English as* LESSONS ON THE ANALYTIC OF THE SUBLIME. *Stanford University Press. 246 pp. $21.95 paper.*

LA CONFESSION D'AUGUSTIN. By JEAN-FRANÇOIS LYOTARD. *Éditions Galilee, 1998. Translated into English as* THE CONFESSION OF AUGUSTINE. *Stanford University Press. 96 pp. $17.95 paper.*

SAINT PAUL: LA FONDATION DE L'UNIVERSALISME. By ALAIN BADIOU. *Presses Universitaires de France, 1997. Translated into English as* SAINT PAUL: THE FOUNDATION OF UNIVERSALISM. *Stanford University Press. 128 pp. $15.95 paper.*

L'ÊTRE ET L'ÉVÉNEMENT. By ALAIN BADIOU. *Éditions Seuil, 1988. Not translated into English.*

L'ÉTHIQUE: ESSAI SUR LA CONSCIENCE DU MAL. By ALAIN BADIOU. *Hatier, 1993. Translated into English as* ETHICS: AN ESSAY ON THE UNDERSTANDING OF EVIL. *Verso. 224 pp. $16 paper.*

THE PUPPET AND THE DWARF: THE PERVERSE CORE OF CHRISTIANITY. By SLAVOJ ZIZEK. *MIT Press. 190 pp. $16.95 paper.*

ON BELIEF. By SLAVOJ ZIZEK. *Routledge. 176 pp. $12.95 paper.*

THE FRAGILE ABSOLUTE—OR, WHY IS THE CHRISTIAN LEGACY WORTH FIGHTING FOR? By SLAVOJ ZIZEK. *Verso. 188 pp. $16.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and thoroughly formed by the Church. In his 2001 memoir, *The Gatekeeper*, there are affecting and funny descriptions of his service as altar boy in the 1950s, of his education in Catholic schools, and of his toying with the idea of the priesthood in the late 1950s—he briefly visited a minor seminary with this in mind but decided that sex and literature were more interesting than celibacy and liturgy. And although Eagleton appears to have abandoned his Catholicism by his middle twenties, and certainly is in no danger of being thought doctrinally orthodox, there is in his work none of the bitterness and anger so often evident in the recollections of American lapsed Catholics. Quite the contrary: his Catholic education, he thinks, made it easy for him to become both a Marxist and a literary theorist, the former because the Church made political liberalism unattractive from the beginning ("The path from the Tridentine creed to Trotskyism is shorter than it seems"—so, of course, is the path back), and the latter because his Catholicism accustomed him to combining "rigorous thought with sensuous symbolism, the analytic with the aesthetic." These are entirely accurate judgments; Eagleton adds to them the claim that his Catholicism made him alive to the depth of human savagery (he thinks the tag *homo homini lupus* unjust to wolves, and, of course, he is right) and to the radicality that any solution to it would need.

Eagleton is, then, a post-Catholic Marxist whose connections with various more or less militant leftist political organizations in England and Ireland have had all the complication and flavor made inevitable by the fissiparous tendencies of the militant left. The Catholics he likes are also Marxist: he had a long and close connection at Oxford and in Ireland with Herbert McCabe, the English (later Irish) Dominican, who died in 2001, and whose political sympathies were very much in accord with Eagleton's. Eagleton dedicated his novel about Wittgenstein, *Saints and Scholars* (1987), to McCabe, and writes in the preface to *After Theory* that the influence of McCabe's thought on his argument is so pervasive that it is impossible to localize. The literary and cultural theorists he likes, too, are those who have not been seduced by the detachment of signifiers from signifieds and have not been led by the unrestrained quest for intellectual *jouissance* to abandon the realism necessary for accurate diagnosis of social and political injustice and abuse as well as for the work (theoretical and practical) required to correct those things.

Eagleton has held academic positions at Oxford and Cambridge, and has lectured and taught throughout the world. He describes himself as specializing in literary and cultural theory and in the English-language literature and culture of Ireland, and he has written massively, obsessively—more than thirty books and hundreds of articles and essays. Much of what he writes is haute vulgarization of the best kind: witty, thoughtful, and accurate analyses of and commentaries upon the thought of other contemporary theorists. This is the genre to which *After Theory* belongs. In it, Eagleton gives a brief history of what he takes to be the rise and fall of high cultural theory and a set of recommendations as to what should be done about it. He would like to salvage modes of speaking and thinking that encourage a political and social order that does not ignore (but rather sees with clarity) human deprivation, and that makes possible action aimed at remedying it. For this salvage operation he turns to Aristotle and Aquinas.

This move is already interesting. Eagleton does not turn to classical Marxist theory, realist though it is. He assumes that it has no purchase on the present, and he is correct. Where else, then, to look? It is not only Eagleton's Catholic heritage that predisposes him to look at Aristotle and Aquinas, though no doubt that plays a part. It is also that there really is nowhere else to look. Eagleton's narrative of decline clears the field: if the Babylon of the market has captured cultural theory, and if the nation-state and the university are now hostage to the corporation, the gaze in search of an intellectual tradition with sufficient resources and independence to do what Eagleton wants done must turn to the religions and the intellectual traditions they harbor.

Eagleton sees clearly that if the political position he wishes to occupy is to be defended against anti-essentialists, tribalists, and (perhaps above all) liberals, this must be done by reclaiming the Aristotelian-Thomist language of truth and virtue. His reclamation is witty and convincing; to most Catholics it will be rather obvious. He begins with truth, claiming that there are truths of a universal sort—indeed, that it is characteristic of the proper usage of the predicate "is true" to attribute universality to the claims to which it is attached. If, he says, "racism is evil" is true, then it is true not just for me and you and other right-thinking (but inevitably Hamlet-like) liberals, but just true, for all and everywhere. But not only that: "[I]t belongs to our dignity as moderately rational creatures to know the truth," he says, and this is an important political fact because its denial eviscerates political action of passion and finally even of possibility.

To say that something belongs to our dignity is to say that we have a nature, "a way of living which is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

peculiar to being a successful human, and which, if we are true to it, will allow us to prosper." This nature is neither infinitely flexible nor subject to our own decisions. It is, instead, what we are. Offending against its demands brings trouble and removes the possibility of flourishing; acceding to them brings the happiness that consists in becoming what we should be (Eagleton is quite aware that "happiness" used in this sense has little or nothing to do with feeling good). The know-how needed to live as our nature requires is virtue; and in explaining what this means Eagleton happily draws, sometimes explicitly and sometimes not, upon both Aristotle and Aquinas. He stops short of the theological virtues, of course: the closest approach he makes to explicitly Christian talk about these matters is to say that we fulfill our nature when we become occasions for one another's fulfillment—an insight which he also likes to express by saying that our nature is constitutively political.

Eagleton identifies capitalism and liberalism as the main enemies of this way of understanding ourselves. Capitalism is committed, in his opinion, to the idea that humans are infinitely plastic, that our appetites can be shaped into ever-new forms without constraint by nature. The market requires such a view so that it can educate our desires into inexhaustibly new patterns of need and consumption. And liberalism is the enemy of virtue-theory, he thinks, because of its subjectivism and its tendency to be unable to commit itself to anything other than a formal set of constraints upon what human beings should do. Capitalism and liberalism are among Marxism's traditional enemies. But as so conceived they are also, in considerable part, the enemies of Catholicism. Pope John Paul II's objections to the empty formalism of successive drafts of the prolegomenon to the European Union's Constitution are in essence the same as Eagleton's objections to liberalism; and the critique of unconstrained capitalism found in such papal encyclicals as *Rerum Novarum* or *Centesimus Annus* would not be out of place in the pages of *After Theory*.

Eagleton never appeals to God, of course. For him, human nature and human virtue have nothing to do with the God who declares himself to Moses or who becomes incarnate as Jesus Christ. But in most other respects his critique of academic practice after the ruin of Marxist cultural theory is one that Catholics might embrace. Rehabilitating Marxism with the Egyptian gold of Aristotle and Aquinas is likely, though, to bring into being what to Marxists will seem an idol whose face bears an uncanny resemblance to Christ's. And this should not be surprising to Christians: Christian wisdom is not as easily separable from the person of Christ as Eagleton appears to think.

Eagleton is not the only eminent cultural theorist driven to Christian resources by lack and nostalgia. Jean-François Lyotard (1924-1998)—who to Eagleton is a figure representative of what went wrong with theory and who is my second instance of Christian yearnings—moved in this direction at the end of his life. Lyotard was trained as a philosopher, and after an early career teaching in secondary schools and working as theorist and activist for the group *Socialisme ou barbarie* (the name accurately indicates the range of alternatives it entertained), he settled down to an academic career in the higher reaches of the French academy with frequent forays into the U.S. At the time of his death his reputation had passed its peak, but during the 1970s and '80s it stood very high indeed, and in the English-speaking world he was during those years treated as a minor deity by his acolytes and as something close to a charlatan—a virtuoso of obscurantism and pretension—by his detractors. Eagleton dismisses him as someone who, after the glory days of the '60s, abandoned Marxism for mysticism, for intergalactic travel (on both of which Lyotard has written), and—worst of all—for Giscard d'Estaing, whom he supported in the French elections of 1974.

Eagleton is too critical. Lyotard was in fact a thinker and writer (in the oracular-poetical style) of great gifts. His *La Condition postmoderne* (1979) stated with relative clarity and brevity the essential commitments of high post-structuralist theory and is still a frequent point of reference. And his work of the 1980s and early '90s, especially *Le Différend* (1983), and *Leçons sur l'analytique du sublime* (1991) began to put into practice the positive intellectual program that had been suggested only negatively in his earlier work. Eagleton is right, however, about the reasons for Lyotard's rejection of Marxism: once the possibility of justifying any particular mode of knowledge-production by appeal to a narrative external to itself (a metanarrative, that is) has been jettisoned, the field is then open for a linguistic and conceptual play dazzled by its own excess and no longer moved by the desire for an orthodoxy that might be capable of accounting for everything by linguistic and conceptual procedures whose net nothing can escape. High theory is sublimely condensed into *jouissance*, and so Marxism is replaced as frame and motive for thought by the ecstatic quest for the sublime, evident most clearly in the search for what Lyotard calls the *différend*.

The *différend* is what makes an unpredictable and unaccountable difference. When it enters a particular

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

language-game (Wittgenstein's shadow hovers over Lyotard throughout the 1980s), it disrupts that game and forces those who try to take account of it to fall silent, to stop playing, and, eventually, to respond to the *différend*'s irreducible particularity without reducing it to a category given by some universalizing speculative-theoretical discourse, such as Christian theology or classical Marxist theory. Lyotard's later work can, therefore, be understood as a poetics of the *différend*, which is to say also of the sublime. This poetics identifies thought's work as a demand on language analogous to the demand a lover places on the beloved's skin. Thought demands of language that it respond to caresses, that it be the tactile other, an endlessly alluring and never fully comprehensible surface. This libidinal search for the *différend*, for something that enters thought and language from without and cannot be fully accommodated by them, led Lyotard at the end of his life to Augustine. Among the last things he wrote was a set of notes for a book on Augustine, published posthumously as *La Confession d'Augustin* (1998).

In Lyotard's reading, Augustine is not so much a Christian thinker as a poet of the sublime, someone whose own prose responds to the *différend* (God) in a peculiarly intense fashion. Augustine's Neoplatonic metaphysics is dismissed by Lyotard with a casual wave of the hand ("the falsely wise arguments aiming to give substance to a metaphysics that is, after all, nothing but a hazardous allegoric and one, what is more, that is lax in its interpretation"), and he treats Augustine as a writer whose performance as such is intended to remove the writer before the face of God, who is the *différend*, "the Other, pure verb in act, life without remainder," who cannot be measured by any language except that which undercuts its own distension in time by constant self-referential attention to its own incapacity to speak of the eternal.

There is a good deal in this. Lyotard is quite right that Augustine is deeply concerned with the relation between language's temporality and truth's eternity, and that his invocation of God in words is intended in large part to show the inadequacy of every such invocation. And Lyotard's own skill with language permits him to replicate the tensions of Augustine's prose. Christians who read Lyotard on Augustine will often feel themselves in the linguistic presence of Augustine ventriloquized: Lyotard's writing has something of the same hallucinatory intensity and delight in the sound and structure of prose, and much of his book on Augustine is just a series of meditative embroideries upon Augustine's own rhetorical effects in which Augustine is neither criticized nor engaged but rather is taken as occasion for Lyotard's own linguistic *jouissance*—or, if you prefer a more Anglo-Saxon idiom, his desire to show off for his own pleasure and that of his readers. Though some of it is self-indulgent pyrotechnical display, the book as a whole is imbued with a genuine appreciation of what Augustine is up to in the *Confessions*, in the Psalm-commentary, and in the early treatises on language and interpretation. Lyotard is eloquent and accurate in his elaborations upon Augustine's concern with the constant threat of non-being posed by time to thought and speech, and with the fact of his own enigmatic incomprehensibility to himself.

Lyotard's Augustine is the poet, the *rhetor*, the lover of language's capacity to depict its own incapacity to depict, the enigma, the pauper in the place of desolation and destitution which he shares with the prodigal. But it is not Augustine the bishop, the refuter of heresy, the user of the Church's powers of governance and persuasion, the writer of a monastic rule, the theorist of the divine trinity. To point out this incompleteness is not to criticize Lyotard: his book is no treatise, no scientific biography; it has no aspiration to exhaustiveness. But to note the very restricted interest in Augustine that Lyotard shows is to raise the question of whether the Augustinian gold that he finds and molds can so easily be expropriated. For Augustine, the enigmatic poetry of confession is worthwhile because it is a response to divine gift, an instance of returning the gift to the giver. Lyotard sometimes seems to see this; but to see it clearly would be dazzlingly dangerous—it would be to begin to see that Augustine's God is not only the unassimilable *différend*, but also the God of Abraham who has given not only his unassimilability but also himself as flesh. And from this Lyotard draws back, even while approaching it. Lyotard (in his late work, at least) was driven by hunger for the illimitable *jouissance* made possible only by the *différend* more different than which none can be thought. Augustine would have understood this very well: it is an instance of yearning, of the heart's unquietness until it finds the peace given by explicit knowledge of the God of Abraham.

Lyotard and Eagleton, then, both mine Christian gold, Lyotard libidinally and Eagleton politically. And they are not the only ones. Among contemporary French post-structuralists about whom Eagleton has written respectfully is Alain Badiou (born in 1937). Badiou, an atheist, a Marxist with Maoist leanings, and a man quite without Eagleton's memories of Christian orthodoxy or Lyotard's ecstatic identification with Augustine's linguistic raptures, has recently written a book on St. Paul.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Badiou was born in Morocco as a French citizen, and is among the French philosophical elite: educated in philosophy at the École Normale Supérieure, he taught for thirty years at the University of Paris. His work, however, has only recently begun to appear in English, and because of the aggressive monolingualism of most American philosophers this means that he is only now beginning to gain a readership in the United States. Badiou is old enough to have been shaped essentially and irrevocably by the events of 1968 in Paris and by the French African colonies' earlier bloody struggles for independence, and he fits Eagleton's depiction of someone who does theory as it ought to be done, both then and since: Badiou was for a long time a Communist, in his case a member of the Marxist-Leninist *Union des Jeunesses Communistes*; he was also an occasional apologist for Mao's Cultural Revolution and remains an active member of *L'Organisation Politique*, which is a militantly left political pressure group whose membership is mostly post-party Communist. This continued political activism distinguishes him from Lyotard and explains Eagleton's approval of him.

It should not be surprising that Christianity and the Catholic Church have figured little in Badiou's work until recently, and then only as the political and philosophical "other" destined for history's dustbin and unworthy of sustained intellectual attention. His main philosophical goal has been to defend and elucidate a particular understanding of the relations among truth, subjectivity, the event, and the universal. His thought on these matters is complex, subtle, and interesting: it can be studied at length in *L'Être et l'événement* (1988), or more briefly in *l'Éthique* (1993). In these works he gives an account of how radical change is effected, and his central notion is that of the "la site événementielle," the evental site, a place in which something radically other occurs, something that cannot be accommodated by the ordinary categories of its site and that makes a universal demand. What Badiou means by "event" is in its essentials also what Lyotard meant by *différend*: both men sought a category to permit analysis of the profoundly other's entry into causal relations with the quotidian. Christians would say that what occurs at the evental site is revelatory; Badiou calls it revolutionary, but he recognizes that to speak of the event as he does is to speak of laicized grace—which is to say that he is throughout conscious of his own dependence upon Christian language and thought, and of his pressing need to uproot them and strip them of all specificity so that he is not forced by them into the arms of the God of Abraham.

Human subjects may be constituted ("subjectivated," Badiou likes barbarously to say) by an authentic, continuing, and faithful response to this revolutionary event; and insofar as they are so constituted, they contribute to the radical transformation—a material transformation, of course, for him—of the social and political order in which they find themselves. Transformation, for Badiou, is possible only by means of an event that originates from outside that which is transformed by response to the event. The transformation is produced by a continuing attempt to discern the trace (the *vestigium*, Augustine would say) of the event in the social and political spheres.

Badiou's reasons for turning to Paul also bear some similarity to Lyotard's for turning to Augustine. For Lyotard, the sublime is most effectively present when the *différend* is truly and ecstatically different; for Badiou, the event transforms most profoundly when it is most unexpected, unexplained, and beyond the reach of any but a formal theory. For both, the Christian tradition provides what they can find nowhere else: it meets the theoretical lack. This is more obvious in Badiou's case than in Lyotard's, and the lack is more difficult for him to deal with than it was for Lyotard. Because of his political commitments and the nature of his philosophy, Badiou must treat Paul as a resource for political and social action, while Lyotard can treat Augustine as a prompt for linguistic display. The sense of loss from which Badiou reads Paul is palpable. He needs "a new militant figure . . . to succeed the one installed by Lenin and the Bolsheviks." That figure (Badiou does not say but implies) is lost, frozen in the Gulag, crushed under the tracks of the Soviet tanks as they rolled into Prague, withered by the increasing willingness of China to accept capital's blandishments, and dismembered by the breakup of the Soviet Empire. This loss can, he hopes, be supplied by Paul, but only if Paul is disjoined from the fable that is Christianity and read as advocating a "subject without identity and a law without support."

This reading of Paul, thinks Badiou, can serve as a counterweight to the two logics that now dominate the world's political, economic, and intellectual life: the logic of capitalism regnant, which subsumes the human subject into the consumer (much of what Badiou says about this is also said by John Paul II, but this is not a kinship he would wish to acknowledge); and the logic of identitarianism rampant, which subsumes the human subject into some ethnic ("French," "African"), gender ("male," "female"), or religious ("Christian," "Muslim") identity. All such subsumptions, thinks Badiou, make authentic subjec-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tivation impossible—and he understands Paul's proclamation of a subjectivity constituted only by faithful response to the resurrected Jesus to be a remedy for all this because it "names the subject according to the force of displacement conferred upon him"—displacement, that is, via baptism's death, from every prior identity.

Paul, read in this way, is Badiou's ideal anti-philosopher. He proclaims an utterly universal event to which the same revolutionary response is required from all. It is revolutionary because it wants to "destroy a model of society based on social inequality," and its discourse is, from beginning to end, that of sheer, unanticipated event, event that dissolves the (Jewish) law's demand, as well as the (Greek) totalizing search for wisdom. Those who hear and respond to this proclamation are reconstituted by filiation—they become sons and daughters of the event, no longer constituted by gender, ethnicity, habits of consumption, and so on.

What Badiou wants from Paul, then, is a pattern of thought capable of tearing "the lexicon of grace and encounter away from its religious confinement." This is a purely formal reading: in it, the proclamation of Christ crucified is emptied of content and left only with function, the function of making it possible for all who respond to the proclamation subsequently to devote themselves to what has universal validity by showing them the emptiness of the contingencies they take to constitute their identities. Paul, in Badiou's hands, is the master of the gesture whose only content is provided by what it encounters. Badiou has no interest in the substance of Paul's ethic, and his interest in Christ's resurrection is limited to the effects its proclamation may have on those who hear about it (he attributes, wrongly, that same limitation to Paul). What he does want from Paul, and what he thinks he gets, is a vantage point from which the twentieth century's deadening ideologies of sameness—the unrestricted globalization of capital, the exhaustive identitarianism of ethnic or sexual sameness—can be resisted. This is what Badiou means by the logic of universalism. Universalism permits resistance to the imperialistic demands of the ideologies of particularity, and it does so not by coercive argument or legal demand, but rather by proclamation of a universal truth that can and should provoke a response. In this way, Badiou's required militant figure stands forth.

It is interesting to note that this way of reading Paul requires Badiou to offer a strong defense of Paul against the now-traditional charges of misogyny and associated sins of oppressive particularity. Paul's treatment of difference, claims Badiou, uses a principle of "subsequent symmetrization" according to which particular differences are affirmed (say, between men and women with respect to the covering of their hair), but only in such a way as to relate their possessors symmetrically to the universal event. In a nice formulation, Badiou says that for Paul differences are traversed by the truth in such a way that their bearers "carry the universal that happens to them like a grace." Badiou is in this respect a much stronger defender of Paul than are many contemporary interpreters who identify themselves as Christian.

Badiou's reading of Paul is, on the whole, innocent of contemporary New Testament scholarship, Catholic and Protestant alike. This is not entirely a bad thing: it permits him to write directly and spontaneously about Paul's texts and their claims. But there are many points at which what he says stands in contradiction with how almost all New Testament scholars understand Paul; and his enterprise of separating Paul from, among other things, the God of Abraham is as quixotic as that of separating Marx from economics. Worse, there is much in Badiou's reading of Paul that has the harshly stimulating flavor of old Protestant critiques of the Catholic Church (Paul is to the Church, says Badiou, as Lenin was to the Stalinist terror: a militant whose militancy gets co-opted by an ideology of sameness). It is also clear that Badiou's interest in Paul signals no desire on his part to worship the God of Abraham by way of entry into communion with any Christian church.

There is also a persistent lack of clarity in Badiou's understanding of truth: if Paul's proclamation of Christ resurrected can be true even if Christ was not in fact resurrected, the conclusion must be that any proclamation with the formal properties he attributes to Paul's proclamation can be true. But Badiou has elsewhere (and often) protested against the idea that, for example, Hitler's proclamation of the Third Reich ought be categorized as eventual. But presumably the only reason why it ought not to be is that its content is (in Badiou's opinion) false. In its formal properties, Hitler's proclamation seems difficult to distinguish from Lenin's (or Paul's). There is a conundrum here that Badiou does not resolve.

However, none of this is to say that Badiou's book is without interest for Christian thinkers. It shows the depth of the yearning nostalgia to which post-Marxist cultural theorists are now almost inevitably subject. The golden calf Badiou has made of Paul is worthy of Christian attention, both as an instance of idol-building and as evidence of the extent to which Christian materials resist being made into idols. The face of his Paul, in spite of Badiou's best efforts, still

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bears the iconic trace of Christ, and this trace is most fully and beautifully evident in what Badiou writes about the radical demand of Paul's proclamation, and the possibility of ordering a life around response to it.

My last exemplar of Christian yearning—and in this case the yearning is almost fully acknowledged and understood—is Slavoj Zizek, in many ways the most interesting of the four. Eagleton writes about him with respect, and Zizek returns the compliment, as well as commenting favorably on Badiou's treatment of St. Paul (these are incestuous circles). Zizek was born in 1949 in Ljubljana, then in Yugoslavia, now in Slovenia. Three among his books published in the last five years—*The Fragile Absolute: Or, Why Is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting for?* (2000), *On Belief (Thinking in Action)* (2001), and *The Puppet and the Dwarf* (2003)—deal in large part with Christian thought: considerable stretches of them are best described as pagan works of Christian philosophical theology. Zizek is the youngest of my exemplars and is the only one reared and educated under the auspices of the Warsaw Pact rather than NATO. This is important: it means that 1968, when Zizek was not yet twenty, was for him the year of the Prague Spring, not the year of pseudo-revolutionary excitements on the streets of Paris. It means, too, that the sentimentality about "real socialism" so easy for and attractive to his French and English counterparts was never a live option for him. His struggle was not to find a position from which to criticize socialism without capitulating to the rampant market; it was, rather, to find the theoretical resources with which to retrieve a properly revolutionary stance that could carry conviction to an affluent Western audience born after 1950, for many of whom the pressing question is not where the revolution is coming from, but rather whether plastic surgery or Westernized Buddhism (a bête noire of Zizek's) is the best route to personal fulfillment.

Zizek is, nonetheless, a soi-disant Marxist who is more likely to quote Lenin than Marx—and more likely to quote Jacques Lacan than either. This last name—that of a famously obscure French psychoanalyst and theorist who died in 1981 and whose legacy is as hotly contested among his followers as is that of Vatican II among Catholic theologians—indicates another way in which Zizek differs from my other exemplars (though he is most like Eagleton in this respect): it is that he is at least as interested in the cure of souls as in the revolution's coming. Or, perhaps better, that he wants to be able to apply his theoretical resources not only to the political economy but also to the libidinal, the psychological, and the aesthetic. This is why, like Eagleton, he writes about popular culture, especially film, as much as about pure theory. Abstruse Lacanian technicalities and sparkling Chestertonian paradoxes are as often juxtaposed to discussions of Julia Roberts as of Jürgen Habermas; and Zizek is the only theorist known to me who attempts elucidation of Christ's two natures by way of analysis of the relation between Judy and Madeleine in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (the two women, while different in every significant behavior, are one and the same; the film's culmination, taken by Zizek as a representation of faith's dawning, is Jimmy Stewart's realization of the two women's identity just as they—she—die). Zizek's theoretical ambition is enormous and may be matched by his energy: he wants to explain everything, and has written forty or so books in (at least) three languages during the past two decades as the first steps in an attempt to do so.

What, then, about his recent forays into Christian philosophical theology? His favored Christian interlocutors are St. Paul and G. K. Chesterton, and he treats both with respect as providing workable answers to his central theoretical question, which concerns the possibility of a politics of truth. By this he means a politics that identifies the unconditional demand of ethics (a life authentically constituted by doing the right thing) with the full demand of a radical politics. *On Belief* begins with an endorsement of a Southern Baptist preacher's view that if ethics—being a good person—is disjoined from belief in Christ by being given value independently of such belief, Christianity is thereby eviscerated. According to the preacher, Christians should say that if you don't have faith you're damned, no matter how (ethically) good you may be.

Zizek does not endorse all the particulars of this form of Christianity (he ridicules the sartorial and tonsorial preferences of Southern Baptists). But he does endorse the logic of the position, which is that of universalism *stricto sensu*: there is only one thing that matters and it matters in just the same way for everyone. This is, moreover, a universalism that refuses liberalism's privatization of the ethical and its relegation of the political to the pragmatic. Zizek wants what he calls a materialist fundamentalism and thinks that the only way to get it is by drawing from the thought of those who were able to represent in their writings what it would mean to "out-universalize universal power." These figures include Lenin, Lacan (rightly read), St. Paul, and G. K. Chesterton—and in the three books under discussion here, the last two get much more play than the first two.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The principal claimants to universal power at the beginning of the third millennium, thinks Zizek (in essential agreement with Eagleton and Badiou), are liberal democracy (in politics) and the market (in economics). These will, if you let them, define you exhaustively by your choices as a consumer and will permit you only a political life ordered by a set of formal rights and duties—to vote, to maintain privacy, to be left alone, to purchase, to consume, phantasmatically (a favorite Zizekian word) to imagine meanings in the privacy of your chamber. This claim to universal power can only be resisted by the self-sacrificial gesture of renunciation most clearly evident, thinks Zizek, in Christ's acceptance of death on the cross. Gestures like these maintain agency: they do not abandon the self to the principalities and powers by accepting the division between the ethical and the political offered by those powers, but they also pay the inevitable price for this refusal, which is to have the agent's identity radically changed—killed and resurrected. Here is a typically overheated Zizekian way of putting this:

> The Christian answer is that, precisely, *the tension between the pacifying Law and the excessive superego is not the ultimate horizon of our experience*: it is possible to step out of this domain, not into the fake imaginary bliss, but into the Real of an act; it is possible to cut the Gordian knot of transgression and guilt.

"The Real of an act"—elsewhere, Zizek calls this "the breakout" in the sense of a jailbreak. The jail in question is constituted by the "vicious dialectic" of the Law (Zizek's upper-casing of "Law" is self-consciously Pauline) and its "obscene supplement," which is the transgressive desire inevitably generated by the law, together with the superego's necessarily failed attempts to constrain and cancel that transgressive desire. There is, thinks Zizek, only one way out of this prison, and that is to suspend the dialectic that constitutes it, and to do so by means of love. Love does not actively rebel against the Law's demand by revolution or violence: to do so would be transgressive, falsely heroic. Neither does love accept its submission to and definition by the Law by projecting fantasies of escape into some ideal realm beyond politics (genetic or surgical immortality; heaven as utopia). No, instead one simply removes oneself from the dialectic by renouncing it: like Medea or Sethe (in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*) or Abraham, one kills (or shows one's willingness to kill) the precious thing that keeps one subject to the dialectic, and one does so out of fidelity to and love for what one kills; or, like Christ, one fulfills the Law by accepting death, and in so doing gives "birth to a new subject no longer rooted in a particular substance, redeemed of all particular links." Zizek's interest here (and this he takes from Lacan) is in the self-referential gesture that appears to destroy or damage the one making it, but in fact transforms him by liberating him from what seemed an impossible dilemma. This self-referential gesture is "the Real of an act," and its ideal type is Christ's crucifixion.

It may seem from all this that Zizek is Christian in all but name. But that would be far from the truth. What interests him about Christianity (as it also interests Badiou) is the conceptual resources it offers for the depiction of a community of those free from political and economic domination. This community, as he says, is constituted by the Holy Spirit, and its members live as though their lives have been given to them as an excessive gift that can only be redeemed by living furiously (this is Chesterton's language) but at the same time by living as though it were a matter of complete indifference whether life continues at all. Put differently: the Holy Spirit brings into being a community of love, which is to say a community fully within the Law without any possibility of transgression, because transgression is possible only for those still subject to the superego's obscene supplement to the Law. Zizek might have quoted (though he doesn't, so far as I can tell) Augustine's "*ama et fac quod vis*"—love and do what you will. A Zizekian reading of this would say that loving action removes the Law's obscene supplement. And this, so far as it goes, is indeed a thoroughly Christian reading.

But for Zizek the community brought into being by the Holy Spirit is not the Church. The Church could become the (true) Church, in his view, only if it, too, made the self-referential gesture of abnegation:

> In what is perhaps the highest example of Hegelian *Aufhebung*, it is possible today to redeem this core of Christianity only in the gesture of abandoning the shell of its institutional organization. . . . The gap here is irreducible: either one drops the religious form, or one maintains the form but loses the essence.

What Zizek does not see is that the Church here below is constituted precisely by the endless repetition of the self-abnegatory gestures he praises: the Pope is *servus servorum Dei* (the servant of the servants of God), the most powerful man in the world precisely because of his renunciation of power; the endlessly repeated eucharistic feast places the Church daily under erasure before its Lord; and the most

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

characteristically ecclesial confession is that offered by Paul in 1 Timothy 1:15, according to which Paul is, he says, the first among sinners. Zizek may mean that no institutional form is appropriate to Christianity; but that would be a perfectionism which every good materialist (and Zizek claims to be one) should reject. If, then, there is an institutional form appropriate to the community brought into being by the Holy Spirit, Zizek offers no convincing reasons for denying that it is the Church.

These yearnings of pagan or half-pagan cultural theorists for a Christianity half-forgotten or never properly known are not all of the same sort. Lyotard's libidinal desire for the supremely effective *différend* is in almost every important way at odds with Badiou's and Zizek's yearning for a truly liberative understanding of the human. And although Eagleton's retrieval of a broadly Christian virtue theory does serve political goals not far from those of Zizek and Badiou, he shows less interest than either of them in exploring the grammar of specifically Christian views. It is difficult, for example, to imagine him offering a theory of Christ's atonement, while Zizek is eager to do so. What all four have in common, however, is that they are instances of pagan yearning for Christian intellectual gold. Christian thinkers, theologians, and philosophers will find much to quarrel with in the particulars of what they argue; but those are quarrels that should have begun long since. For the pagans, Christianity is increasingly attractive; for us Christians, now as always, what the pagans have to say is of interest as an occasion for restating the gospel to the world, and for understanding more fully what we have been entrusted with. We should be paying close attention. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books in Review

An Era's Last Hurrah

A Family of His Own: A Life of Edwin O'Connor. By Charles F. Duffy. *Catholic University of America Press. 464 pp. $49.95.*

Reviewed by Joseph Bottum

Somewhere between 1945 and 1963—somewhere, in fact, around the publication of Edwin O'Connor's *The Last Hurrah* in 1956—a certain kind of Catholic culture crested in America. There's a temptation to say it has been slowly ebbing ever since, making its melancholy, long retreat down the naked shingles of the world. But, in truth, that old Catholic tide fled the American shore in a headlong rush. By, say, the late 1960s, what was left? A few Flannery O'Connor stories. A Walker Percy novel or two. A vague memory that the Australian Morris West's papal thriller *The Shoes of the Fisherman* had once topped the American best-seller lists. A handful of anachronistic St. Patrick's Day parades.

I have never known what to make of that vanished 1950s world. This was a Catholicism risen from obscurity and oppression to become the most visible extrapolitical institution in the nation. Catholics were suddenly everywhere: congressmen and actors, war heroes and writers. The seminaries were full, the convents bursting, parochial schools multiplying. But this was also a Catholicism filled with unlikeliness and contradiction, with the promise of its destruction written in the very compromises, adjustments, and assimilations that had purchased its success.

Joseph Bottum *is Books & Arts editor of the* Weekly Standard.

Beyond the hipster and the organization man, above the sociologist and the psychiatrist, 1950s Catholicism seemed to offer a possibility of intellectual seriousness and artistic richness. But surely there's some indictment—a proof of some essential flaw—in the fact that it left so little behind to mark its passing.

And its own passing was, really, its deepest theme, even at the high-water mark of its success. As Charles F. Duffy shows in *A Family of His Own*, the best-selling author Edwin O'Connor was middlebrow Catholic culture's greatest champion in those days. But his better novels are all exercises in melancholy: sweet and sentimental, genuinely comic in a well-mannered way, but finally very, very sad. Not for nothing is *The Edge of Sadness* the title of what is probably his best book. O'Connor's most popular story, *The Last Hurrah*, ends not just with the death of its charming rogue hero, the Irish mayor Frank Skeffington, but also with an explanation of why the fading Irish-American politics he had mastered could never again produce a politician of Skeffington's stature.

Dying of a stroke in 1968 at age forty-nine, O'Connor didn't live to see just how completely his world would vanish, and he has been surprisingly ignored as a representative figure of his day. In 1974, Hugh Rank wrote a slim volume on O'Connor for Twayne's series of monographs on American authors, but Duffy's *A Family of His Own* is the first full account of the novelist's life and work. A professor at Providence College, Duffy draws on O'Connor's unpublished work, particularly an abandoned autobiographical story "The Boy," to create a pleasant and informative if finally somewhat indistinct work.

Duffy has a thesis about O'Connor's writing that seems just about right: the novelist had the Irish tribal feeling that human happiness requires roots in a large, close-knit family, and he viewed the lives of the children and grandchildren of Irish immigrants as proof of the ways America both creates and abolishes the chances for that happiness. But as a biographer, Duffy lacks sufficient novelistic sense to give clear shape to his story of O'Connor's life. All the facts about the novelist are present in *A Family of His Own*, but the man himself remains a curiously blurry figure.

Born in 1918 in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, just south of the Massachusetts border, O'Connor grew up knowing firsthand the situation of immigrants in the Catholic subculture. Fights among the Irish and French Canadians were common, and he saw a 1934 labor battle in which ten thousand workers rioted through Woonsocket. A generation earlier, James T. Farrell would be led by such scenes in his own home town of Chicago to leave the Church and join the Socialist struggle for the rights of labor. Though the three volumes of Farrell's 1938 *Studs Lonigan* contain as precise a picture of Irish-American culture as anyone has ever achieved, the story ends with a May Day parade, a march into a golden proletarian future. But Edwin O'Connor's family was above much of that: middle-class, hoity-toity, lace-curtain Irish of the kind that would make Farrell's costermongers and bricklayers want to put their fists through a wall. O'Connor's father, as Duffy presents him, was a flourishing if somewhat distant doctor, whose nine children were reared to be polite, intelligent, and successful.

Those are the very qualities of

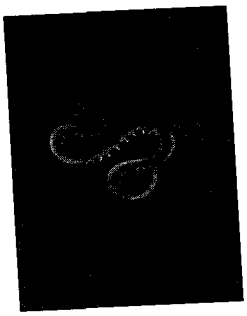
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

O'Connor's novels. Sent to college at Notre Dame, he came under the spell of Frank O'Malley, an enormously charismatic and hugely alcoholic English professor—isn't that another Irish type of those days?—whose abused talent spilled out in long, drunken monologues that both inspired the young writer and turned him into a lifelong teetotaler. After some work in radio and the war years spent in the Coast Guard, O'Connor moved to Boston in 1945, where he did a little scriptwriting, some interesting reporting, and a bit of work for the *Atlantic Monthly*, while writing his first book, *The Oracle*, published in 1951.

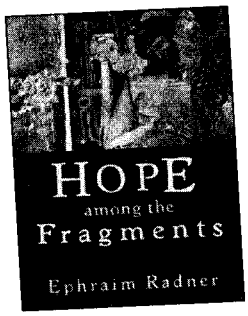
But it wasn't until after he'd been reinvigorated by his first trip to Ireland that the breakthrough came, with the 1956 publication of *The Last Hurrah*. He was, as a result, forever associated with Irish Boston—although, it should be noted, he never actually names Skeffington's city in *The Last Hurrah*, nor did he ever quite admit in interviews that he had used Boston's greatest rascal, the often-elected mayor James Michael Curley, as the model for Skeffington. An immediate and overwhelming success, the book received ecstatic reviews, sold out everywhere, and made O'Connor rich enough to drive around Boston in a Porsche and buy a summerhouse on Cape Cod. Hollywood added to his income, producing a 1958 movie version of *The Last Hurrah*—a dreadful film that is the worst botch John Ford ever directed or Spencer Tracy ever appeared in. (One of the best portions of Duffy's biography of O'Connor is the description of the film's production spiraling down into an incoherent mess.)

O'Connor followed up his success in 1957 with *Benjy: A Ferocious Fairy Tale*, a children's book of surprisingly black comedy about a perfectly mannered little boy named Benjamin Thurlow Ballou living in Smiles, Pennsylvania. The story reads like

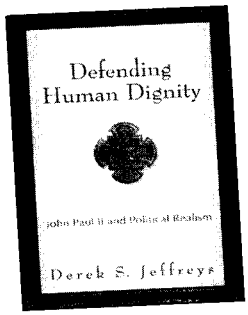
The Tradition Alive



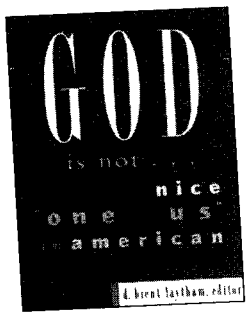
Lying by Paul J. Griffiths
158743086X • 256 pp. • $18.99p
"This is a challenging and rewarding book, unlike any written in modern times on the topic. It will displace all earlier works—except Augustine of course. Griffiths is a clearheaded and rigorous defender of Augustine's treatises on lying, yet he gives objections a full and fair hearing, and at the same time offers a meditation on language as a gift of God by which we speak the truth to one another."
—Robert Louis Wilken, University of Virginia



Hope among the Fragments
Ephraim Radner
1587430843 • 240 pp. • $24.99p
"This is potentially one of the most important contributions you are likely to read on the current tensions and conflicts over the church's limits and identity. It wholly avoids the clichés of left and right and offers an unremittingly theological perspective on our troubles—that is to say, a perspective that obliges us to look to God, and then to our sins, and then to our gratitude. It rescues the call to be a 'biblical' church from polemics and point-scoring. It is a deeply necessary book at this time."
—Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury



Defending Human Dignity by Derek S. Jeffreys
1587430924 • 240 pp. • $19.99p
"For those unfamiliar with the influence of Scheler on the thought of John Paul II, this book is a welcome introduction. However, Jeffreys also helpfully puts his account of the pope's moral and political thought in conversation with the realist school of international relations. No doubt some will challenge his account of realism, but at the very least he has begun a conversation that needs to take place."
—Stanley Hauerwas, Duke Divinity School



God Is Not . . .
D. Brent Laytham, editor
1587431017 • 160 pp. • $14.99p
This provocative book takes on culturally formed misconceptions about who God is by boldly stating who God is not. Contributors Rodney Clapp, D. Stephen Long, Michael Baxter, Michael Budde, William T. Cavanaugh, and D. Brent Laytham offer a lively, necessary, and intelligently reverent read.

Subscribe to "Border Crossings," the Brazos monthly electronic newsletter, at www.brazospress.com
At your local bookstore, www.brazospress.com, or call 1-800-877-2665

BrazosPress
The Tradition Alive

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

something from a proto–Roald Dahl, as Benjy and his Mummy share a contempt for the mild-mannered Daddy, a television repairman, and Daddy's only friend, a dog named Sid. But when a cigar-smoking and hungover fairy shows up to grant Benjy a wish, the resulting catastrophe brings a satisfying comeuppance to Mummy and her insufferable child. The reviews at the time were harshly critical, making it sound as though O'Connor was advocating child sacrifice—although he merely suggested that Benjy's "very special sad-little-boy voice" made Sid the Dog "want to stuff his ears with dirt and pound his head hard on the ground." But, in truth, a floundering quality infused all of O'Connor's work after *The Last Hurrah*. He did win the Pulitzer Prize for his next book, *The Edge of Sadness*, in 1961, with its wry narration by Father Hugh Kennedy and its account of the Irish patriarch Charlie Carmody. And even his very pedestrian attempt to describe a Kennedy-like successful Irish-American political family in the 1966 *All in the Family* sold well. But the disaster of O'Connor's 1964 *I Was Dancing*—which began as a failed play and ended as a failed novel—is proof that he wasn't sure what he should be doing, and he squandered much of his talent and time in a series of disastrous Broadway musicals.

In *A Family of His Own*, Duffy claims that O'Connor's unfinished novel about an elderly American cardinal would have been his greatest work, and the snippets Duffy quotes suggest that he may be right. A settled bachelor, O'Connor startled all his friends with a late marriage at age forty-four that proved surprisingly happy, and it is possible that he was discovering new artistic depths within himself when his life was cut short in 1968.

But I tend to think not. His portraits of Irish-American chieftains had sharper edges and deeper insights than most of the other works in the genre, but they remained sentimental in a style that the nation's reading public was rapidly turning against. He wrote in a moment when Catholic culture seemed to offer something powerful and influential. But, as he himself chronicled, the base of that particular era's power and influence was a tribal unity that was rapidly crumbling. And when the base was gone, the Catholic moment that was built upon it vanished as if it had barely existed. Did Edwin O'Connor himself suspect it? Perhaps in titles like *The Last Hurrah* and *The Edge of Sadness* there is an answer.

Singing and Preaching the Close of the Year:
Zion Hears the Watchmen Singing

The Good Shepherd Institute
Fifth Annual Conference ✠ November 7-9, 2004

Presenters	PLENARIES
Arthur A. Just Jr.	*The End Times Lessons: The Bridegroom Comes, Awake!*
Kent J. Burreson	*The End Times in Luther: The Dear Last Day*
Richard C. Resch	*The End Times in Hymns: Saints and Angels Sing Before You*
Daniel Zager	*The End Times in Bach: "Watch! Pray!"*
Gene E. Veith Jr.	*The End Times in Art*

Presenters	SECTIONALS
Chad L. Bird	*The End Times in Preaching: Proclaiming the Genesis of Revelation*
Steven F. Wente	*The End Times in Literature for Choir*
Timothy C. J. Quill	*The End Times in Pastoral Practice: In the Midst of Earthly Life*
Kevin J. Hildebrand	*The End Times in Literature for Organ: Timeless Repertoire*

	EVENTS
Marilyn Mason ✠	*Organ Recital*
Steven F. Wente ✠	*Hymn Festival*
Seminary Schola Cantorum ✠	*All Saints' Choral Vespers: Bach Cantata #140*
St. Paul's Children's Choir, Fort Wayne ✠	*Choral Vespers*
Professors Just, Pless, and Fickenscher ✠	*Homiletical Study for Advent - November 9-10*

THE GOOD SHEPHERD
INSTITUTE
Pastoral Theology and Sacred Music for the Church

For brochures and more information contact Heidi Mueller at 260-452-2143 or online at www.ctsfw.edu., or write to: The Good Shepherd Institute, Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 North Clinton, Fort Wayne, IN 46825.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Single-Minded Constitution

RESTORING THE LOST CONSTITUTION: THE PRESUMPTION OF LIBERTY. By RANDY E. BARNETT. *Princeton University Press. 366 pp. $32.50.*

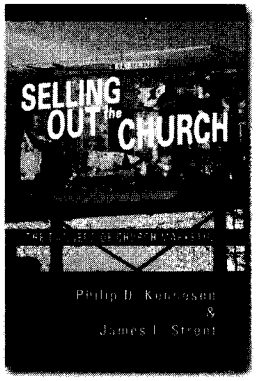
Reviewed by Paul O. Carrese

A GREAT PARADOX of America's constitutional order today is that judges have never been more powerful, yet there has never been more disagreement among both judges and legal scholars about proper use of their power. Federal and state courts grow ever bolder, finding nearly every important issue of politics and social policy to be within their purview, from elections to marriage and presidential powers in wartime. The aggressive federal rulings of recent decades have ignited a constant controversy over the meaning of the Constitution and how to discern that meaning that dwarfs all earlier disputes about judicial power. The recent tactic in the Senate of filibustering judicial nominees seems to be here to stay, as does the discord about basic tenets of judicial power among scholars and judges alike. Readers of this journal are familiar with this controversy, and many citizens find a place in one of the contending camps—whether favoring stricter or looser interpretation, or the Constitution's original intent versus contemporary meanings given to it, or judicial restraint versus a judicial duty to fulfill the broader "promises" of the Constitution.

In *Restoring the Lost Constitution* Randy Barnett brings into the arena a hybrid theory that claims to recover the original understanding of what the Constitution is for and of what judging is, a theory that we might call "libertarian originalism." Those who urge that judicial rulings should be informed by the original intent of a constitutional clause may applaud Barnett for taking the Constitution seriously and for distinguishing judging from legislating. On the other hand, advocates of a "living Constitution" may welcome the latter half of this long and carefully argued book, which sets forth the specific consequences of his interpretation of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Fourteenth Amendment. For Barnett eventually argues that a "presumption of liberty,"

PAUL O. CARRESE *is professor of Political Science at the U.S. Air Force Academy and author of* The Cloaking of Power: Montesquieu, Blackstone, and the Rise of Judicial Activism *(University of Chicago Press). Views expressed here are his own, not of the Academy or the U.S. Government.*

New from Cascade Books
A division of *Wipf & Stock Publishers*
"A cross-confessional publishing venture."

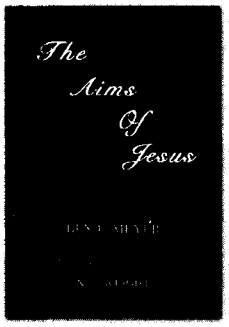


ISBN: 1-59244-296-8
176pp / $21 / Paper

"Kenneson and Street open our eyes to subtle dangers, ambiguous terms, and hidden hazards that we might not have recognized in marketing approaches to the gospel. I am very grateful for their keen insight and biblical wisdom!"
—**Marva J. Dawn**, theologian, speaker, and founder of Christians Equipped for Ministry, and author of *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down.*

"As Luther posted his theses on the cathedral door, so have Kenneson and Street posted their own point-by-point protest on the door of the market-driven church."
—**James E. Baucom, Jr.**, Pastor, Rivermont Avenue Baptist, Lynchburg, VA and Moderator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Virginia.

Also available from
PICKWICK PUBLICATIONS
an imprint of Wipf & Stock



ISBN: 1-55635-041-4
346pp / $35 / Paper

available in stores • www.wipfandstock.com • Tel. (541) 344-1528 • Fax. (541) 344-1506

Epiphanies of Beauty
THE ARTS IN A POST-CHRISTIAN CULTURE

PHILIP BESS
JORGE GARCIA
LAURA GARCIA
JOHN HALDANE
KEVIN HART
THOMAS HIBBS
DAVID LYLE JEFFREY
LEO LINBECK III

ALASDAIR MACINTYRE
RALPH MCINERNY
BARBARA NICOLOSI
WILLIAM SCHICKEL
THOMAS GORDON SMITH
GREGORY WOLFE
RALPH WOOD

NOVEMBER 18-20, 2004
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME
NOTRE DAME CENTER FOR ETHICS AND CULTURE
DAVID SOLOMON, W.P. & H.B. WHITE DIRECTOR
FOR MORE INFORMATION:
574-631-9656
http://ethicscenter.nd.edu

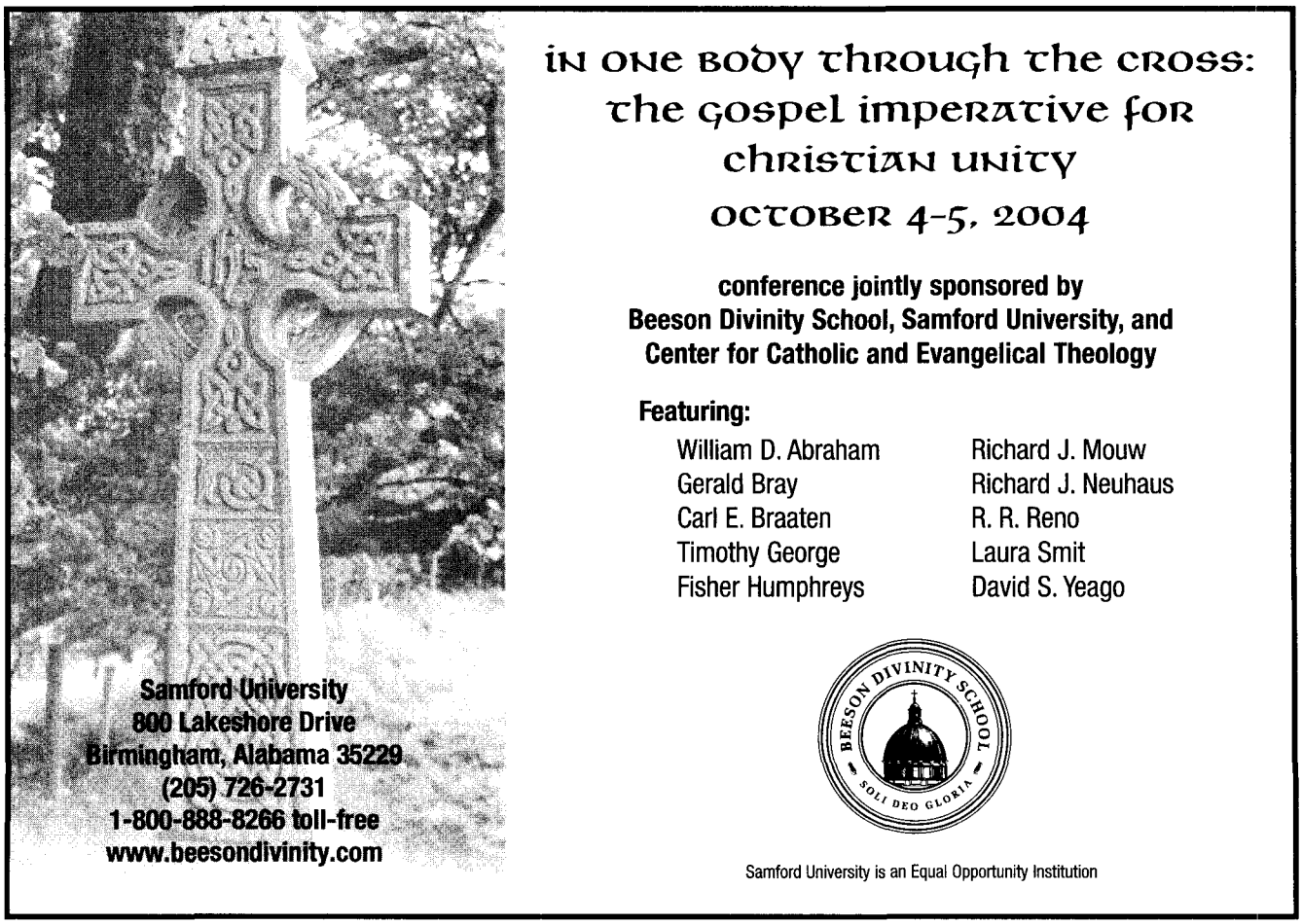
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which makes of our constitutional order mere "islands of government powers in a sea of liberty," requires our judges to invalidate most laws regulating sexuality and individual autonomy, morals, and speech. This bold new constitutional theory thus reinforces what our bold courts have been doing for decades.

It would seem that courts newly armed with this presumption would be duty-bound to scrutinize our law for the last remnants of moral principles, of tradition, and of concern for the common good—for anything that would restrict the autonomy of individuals and of consenting, contracting adults. Barnett denies that this is his intention, but the presumption of liberty that he delineates would effectively turn the judiciary into a perpetual Council of Revision, presuming all state or federal laws to be unconstitutional unless shown not to infringe liberty. Since the framers explicitly debated and rejected a similar idea in the 1787 constitutional convention, and since nothing in the drafting and ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment clearly reverses the concept of a limited judicial power as part of a complex constitutional order, it is hard to square the originalism of this book with its libertarianism.

Barnett, a distinguished law professor at Boston University and senior fellow of the Cato Institute, has published widely on restoring a Lockean natural rights foundation to American law and jurisprudence. He thus has advocated the rediscovery of the Ninth Amendment in the Bill of Rights, which states that the Constitution's enumeration of particular rights "shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people." *Restoring the Lost Constitution* develops this view of individual rights to property, to revolution (thus to bearing arms), and to a host of unenumerated liberties into a grand theory of our constitutional order.

The book has four parts. The first, on "Constitutional Legitimacy," lays out the strictly Lockean premises for a natural rights Constitution: government exists only to protect individual rights, has only the powers expressly granted it, and has no authority to enforce acts to which an individual has not explicitly consented or that he deems a violation of natural rights. The section on "Constitutional Method" advocates interpretation according to the original public meaning of a constitutional clause, to be supplemented but not displaced by the "original intent" of framers and ratifiers. This restores the long-



IN ONE BODY THROUGH THE CROSS:
THE GOSPEL IMPERATIVE FOR
CHRISTIAN UNITY
OCTOBER 4-5, 2004

**conference jointly sponsored by
Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, and
Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology**

Featuring:

William D. Abraham
Gerald Bray
Carl E. Braaten
Timothy George
Fisher Humphreys
Richard J. Mouw
Richard J. Neuhaus
R. R. Reno
Laura Smit
David S. Yeago

BEESON DIVINITY SCHOOL
SOLI DEO GLORIA

Samford University is an Equal Opportunity Institution

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

disparaged approach of "legal formalism," committing lawyers and judges to enduring rules and concepts for interpretation of law. The third section, "Constitutional Liberty," employs these premises of legitimacy and method to examine limits on majoritarian legislation imposed by the Constitution's strict enumeration of powers, by the Ninth Amendment's protection for open-ended rights, and by the Fourteenth Amendment's protection of the "privileges or immunities" of all citizens in all states. The last part assesses the limited "Constitutional Powers" of Congress over the economy and of states over "police" matters of safety, health, and morals, and finds a plenary judicial power to enforce these limits.

THE ARGUMENTS advanced in *Restoring the Lost Constitution* are careful and clear, and the author's search for original meanings of particular constitutional clauses is occasionally brilliant. And yet the jurisprudential reach of the book exceeds its analytical grasp, because Barnett opens with contradictory accounts of his two basic premises, constitutional legitimacy and an originalist method of interpretation. All the powers of the judiciary set forth in the latter half of the book stem from this opening flaw, and, despite his protestations, Barnett's theory effectively would empower a juristocracy to strip from "liberty" nearly all conceptions of communal self-government, a vibrant citizenry, and common moral purposes. This is unfortunate, since he persuasively argues that only originalism, binding judges to the plain meaning of the Constitution or the carefully inferred intent behind it, provides a justification for judicial review of the acts of the elected branches. He exposes our Wizard of Oz world of recent decades, with judges and theorists legislating their preferences in the name of the Constitution while cajoling us to "pay no attention to that man behind the curtain." Barnett's inquiries into federal power, the Bill of Rights, and the Ninth and Fourteenth amendments also contain much of value. His express commitment to originalism, however, exposes him to the criticism that he has not fully captured the views of politics and law embodied in the Constitution, nor its balance between legislative, executive, and judicial powers. On none of these matters did the Founders or even the authors of the Fourteenth Amendment adopt either libertarianism or judicial supremacy.

In an odd move for an originalist, Barnett argues that the Constitution's opening phrase, "We the People," does not mean what it says, since he classifies as "fictions" both the traditional republican idea of political community and the modern idea that a social contract among individuals produces community. I would agree that one should reject the recent theory that the Supreme Court speaks for an evolving We the People in rewriting the Constitution and that one should also reject its New Deal predecessor, the theory that the Constitution means anything demanded by the Rousseauean general will of the moment. Barnett overcorrects, however, by claiming that a Lockean theory of man's natural unsociability is the Constitution's core principle, giving each individual an effective veto over all laws. To make this argument he copiously cites recent historians and political theorists but refers to the Founders more sparingly—whereas throughout the rest of the book the reverse is usually the case. Quite apart from the question of whether Locke in fact held such a strict contractarianism, it is notable that Barnett never mentions the political philosopher most consulted by the framers when forming this constitutional republic: it was not Locke, but the Frenchman Montesquieu. His classic work *The Spirit of Laws* argues that human

WEAVER/INGERSOLL SYMPOSIUM
October 15-16, 2004

Culture:
Why Is It Important?

Honoring
Roger Scruton
winner of the
2004 Richard M. Weaver Prize
for Scholarly Letters

at
Belmont Abbey College,
North Carolina
under the auspices of
The Bradley Institute
for the Study of Christian
Culture

Other Speakers:
Darryl Hart; Mark Henrie;
Peter Augustine Lawler;
Wilfred McClay; Robert
Preston; James V. Schall, SJ;
Gregory Wolfe

For further information contact:
Robert A. Preston
100 Belmont-Mt. Holly Rd.,
Belmont, NC 28012
(704-829-7231) or
www.bradleyinstitute.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nature calls for the right balance between liberty and order, and between the natural rights of individuals and common beliefs and purposes; the same is true of his disciple Blackstone, who persistently tempers liberty with communal order in the *Commentaries*. Libertarian ideas do offer a corrective to the statist or socialist ideas of later centuries; and Barnett rightly argues that Judge Robert Bork, for example, is wrong to dismiss the Ninth Amendment as an "inkblot" unintelligible to a jurist who seeks to avoid legislating. But there is discontinuity, to say the least, in the fact that Barnett dedicates this book to James Madison while overlooking the commitment expressed by Madison in Federalist No. 10 to preventing majoritarian injuries to both the rights of individuals and "the permanent and aggregate interests of the community" or "the public good." Is it a libertarian Constitution whose Preamble declares that "We the People" can "ordain and establish" a fundamental law for broad common purposes, binding upon all, because achieved through reasonable representation and balanced constitutional forms?

A related and significant omission in Barnett's theory is religion, the phenomenon behind the Constitution's self-definition as *ordained* and as protecting individual rights and the pursuit of happiness through a covenantal community greater than any individualist or contractarian parts. John Jay argued in Federalist No. 2, and Washington argued in both his 1783 Circular and 1796 Farewell Address, that an organic American polity existed from the Revolution and yet could only secure natural rights by enacting those bonds in a written fundamental law. Tocqueville's classic analysis of America's "point of departure" in the Puritans—who uniquely blended religion, liberty, and English common law—is also absent from Barnett's book, possibly because Tocqueville confirms that our polity is a Montesquieuean blend of covenantal and contractarian jurisprudence. This is the non-Lockean basis for the aims in the Preamble to "promote the general welfare" and "secure the blessings of liberty," both for the founding generation and their "posterity." Such jurisprudential complexity, further evident in a Constitution that defines itself as ordained and yet forbids both religious tests for office and an established religion, follows Montesquieu and Blackstone in

CRITICAL LOYALTY:
Faith Seeking Understanding

Join Gordon College Faculty and Students in a Deliberation on Critical Issues, Led by Distinguished Thinkers

Gilbert Meilaender
Unbinding Prometheus: The Promises and Pitfalls of Biotechnology—October 4, 2004

John Wilson
Editor, *Books and Culture*
November 5, 2004

Nicholas Wolterstorf
Professor Emeritus Philosophy—Yale University
March 18, 2005

Philip Jenkins
Global Christianity and the Future of Liberal Arts Education
March 31–April 1, 2005

Jeremy Begbie
Thinking Theologically through the Arts
April 4–6, 2005

For more information contact the *Center for Christian Studies*
978.867.4365 • drost@gordon.edu • www.gordon.edu/ccs

Gordon College strives to educate individuals distinguished by Christian character and intellectual maturity, willing to serve others and accept leadership roles worldwide.

This series is made possible by a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment, an Indianapolis-based private foundation that supports the causes of religion, community development and education.

Gordon College
255 Grapevine Road
Wenham, MA 01984
www.gordon.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

blending Locke, Christianity, and classical republicanism.

The common law is yet another source rarely mentioned by Barnett, who seems to acknowledge it selectively: he likes the common law's fixed meanings for property rights but eschews its precedents about morality, duties, or speech. Joseph Story and Chancellor Kent, early nineteenth-century authorities whose works embody this more complex view of American law and liberty, also do not appear; nor does Madison's argument in Federalist No. 49 that if law is to protect liberty there must be a deposit of respect among the people—an argument that certainly cuts against any presumption that all laws are invalid infringements upon liberty. Barnett's recovery of the "original" meaning of liberty is, to say the least, eclectic, and it leads him in his final chapters to celebrate novel judicial rulings on individual autonomy and intimacy which recently have fostered boldness by state judges and officials about gay marriage.

Restoring The Lost Constitution is worth arguing with because it emphasizes the right questions and issues, and because it fundamentally respects the rule of law and the inherent meaning of the Constitution. Barnett worries that our Constitution has been denatured by statist judges and jurists—but his solution raises the concern that his libertarian remedy denatures our constitutional order, not only by removing the separation of powers and federalism from the Constitution but also by vitiating the complex structure of morals, law, and liberty that the Constitution is meant to serve. Does the Tenth Amendment empower judges to limit the federal government to those powers *expressly* provided in the Constitution, with the privileges or immunities clause of the Fourteenth Amendment similarly empowering them to police the states? Isn't this precisely the shackle on governmental power from the Articles of Confederation that the Constitution repudiated, and didn't Madison therefore steer the amendments away from gutting federal power and toward protecting traditional common law rights? Is it plausible that Federalist views of robust judicial power can be married to Anti-Federalist skepticism toward government, while omitting the emphatic Anti-Federalist warnings about a tyrannical and aristocratic judiciary?

Such concerns should not crowd out appreciation for Barnett's defense of natural rights against the skeptical, pragmatist doctrines of recent jurisprudence, which recklessly spend the legal capital built up by more sober jurists over centuries. His search for principled foundations for our constitutionalism and our judicial power helps to restore the legal forms and disciplined approach to interpretation which once separated judging from legislating. Randy Barnett may portray the Constitution as too single-minded, but he brilliantly argues that it does have a mind of its own, and that judges must be governed by it rather than seeking to change it.

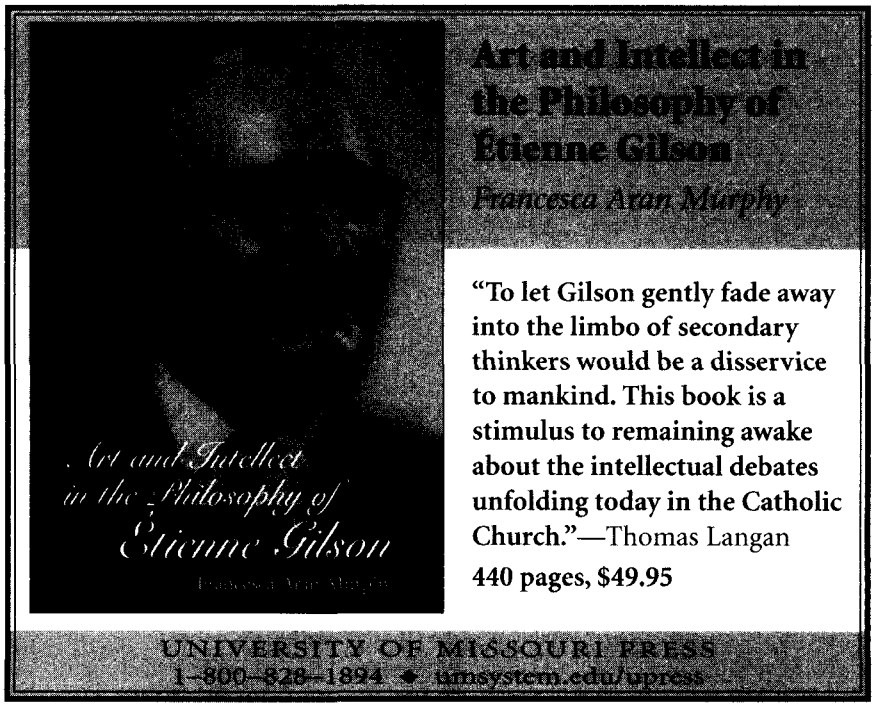
The Great Delayer

BRAHMIN PROPHET: PHILLIPS BROOKS AND THE PATH OF LIBERAL PROTESTANTISM. By GILLIS J. HARP. *Rowman & Littlefield. 236 pp. $32.95.*

Reviewed by R. R. Reno

ON A TRIP TO BOSTON a few years ago, I made a pilgrimage to one of America's most famous Episcopal churches, Trinity Church, Copley Square. I went, in large part, for architectural reasons. I have always admired H. H. Richardson, the architect whose plastic historical imagination is so well represented in the design of Trinity Church. I had my own theological reasons as well. Trinity Church had been recommended to me as something of a Boston anomaly: a vibrant urban parish with a flair for orthodoxy.

R. R. RENO *teaches theology at Creighton University and is the author of* In the Ruins of the Church: Sustaining Faith in an Age of Diminished Christianity *(Brazos)*


Art and Intellect in the Philosophy of Etienne Gilson
Art and Intellect in the Philosophy of Etienne Gilson
Francesca Aran Murphy
"To let Gilson gently fade away into the limbo of secondary thinkers would be a disservice to mankind. This book is a stimulus to remaining awake about the intellectual debates unfolding today in the Catholic Church."—Thomas Langan
440 pages, $49.95
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI PRESS
1-800-828-1894 • umsystem.edu/upress

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Trinity Church's good reputation stems directly from that of its first and best-known rector, Phillips Brooks, who oversaw the construction of the Richardson building and who preached there from its consecration in 1877 until his election as bishop of Massachusetts in 1891. One of the most famous preachers of the Gilded Age, Brooks (1835-1893) was the archetypical Episcopalian of his time: utterly derivative and extremely influential. He was a man who neither thought through any difficult theological issues nor broke any new intellectual ground. What Brooks did instead, as Gillis J. Harp's *Brahmin Prophet* so effectively displays, was to embody and facilitate the changes in spiritual sensibility that would come to define the liberal Protestant establishment.

The first and most important change occurred in what we might call religious epistemology. As Harp's fine study shows convincingly, Brooks was greatly influenced by nineteenth-century Romanticism. The effect was to turn him away from doctrinal systems and toward religious feelings. In his influential reflections on the task of preaching, Brooks argues against expository preaching that relies upon doctrine. Instead, for Brooks, the essence of good preaching is "truth through personality." The authenticity, sincerity, and honesty of the preacher serve as the core of evangelism. The preacher does not just bear witness to some creed—he bears witness to the truths that live in his heart and, in so doing, communicates these living truths to the hearts of others.

This emphasis on feeling and personality naturally led Brooks to discount the fine doctrinal distinctions that had characterized Protestant theology since the Reformation. The consequence was a second change: from a sharply defined confessional faith to a vague and open communion of common sentiment. As Brooks put the matter, "The Church does not *remember* [Christ]. It *feels* him." In his youth, Brooks shrank from the doctrinal controversies that became increasingly fierce in nineteenth-century Protestantism, controversies that seemed to him intellectual jousting that distracted from the essence of Christianity. As he warned in his widely read book on preaching, "Beware of the tendency to preach about Christianity, and try to preach Christ."

With a serene confidence that reflected, perhaps, the dominance of his own social class both in New England and in America as a whole, Brooks saw himself as above faction, and he frequently criticized the "party spirit" that would demand doctrinal uniformity. In his middle

A Journal
CATHOLIC EDUCATION
of Inquiry and Practice

As the only scholarly publication dedicated exclusively to Catholic education, the journal is a must-read for teachers, administrators, pastors, and diocesan staff!

The journal regularly publishes Church documents on education, essays and commentaries from Vatican officials, and various episcopal statements on Catholic education.

For subscription information, please contact:
jwernick@nd.edu
574/631-9996

Catholic Education is supported by sixteen Catholic universities and housed at the University of Notre Dame.

Attention
Catholic Givers

Now it is possible to get all of the advantages of having your own private foundation without any of the high administrative costs.

visit
www.ccfny.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

age, Brooks was largely unbothered by the emerging results of critical study of the Bible. In matters of textual criticism as in matters of doctrine, he felt that anxiety was unwarranted, because what mattered was the singularity of Christ's influence, not the diversity of man's analyses. One whose sentiments were integrated by, and suffused with, the warm message of the gospel could be trusted to navigate by instinct the old theological debates and the new intellectual challenges.

Closely related to Brooks' lack of interest in doctrine and inerrancy was his commitment to religious liberalism. His Broad Church convictions were supported by the belief that a truth sought exerts a more powerful influence than a truth taught. A preacher, in his role as a congregational leader, needs to be free to articulate genuine doubts and to respond to the troubling questions raised by modernity. Only thus can the answer of Christ find a place in the center of the hearts and minds of those who honestly seek the truth. "Narrowness" was one of Brooks' curse words, and he made a point of defending his more adventurous friends from accusations of infidelity. Conscience, thought Brooks, needs elbow room.

In these features—the priority of feeling, insouciance about doctrine, nonchalance about historical-critical challenges to scriptural authority, and commitment to religious liberty—Brooks, as I say, embodied the emergent spirit of modern Protestantism. This spirit is reflected, of course, in his sermons, which are mined by Harp in order to display for us the outlines of Brooks' liberal theology: an optimistic anthropology that downplays the fall, an Arminian soteriology that emphasizes good works, a general shift from the Cross to the Incarnation as the central message of the gospel, and a plastic, minimalist ecclesiology.

TO STATE THESE themes this way is helpful in locating Brooks on the theological spectrum but not so helpful in truly understanding him, for these are ideas, and Brooks' influence was not as a man of ideas. Hazlitt once wrote of Wordsworth's poetry that "it affects a system without having an intelligible clue to one." Theologically, the same could be said of Brooks. It is easy to trace his leading ideas back to earlier, more systematic thinkers. The emphasis on feeling was much championed by English Romanticism. The turn away from Protestant scholasticism was given clear, systematic justification in the theology of Horace Bushnell. The

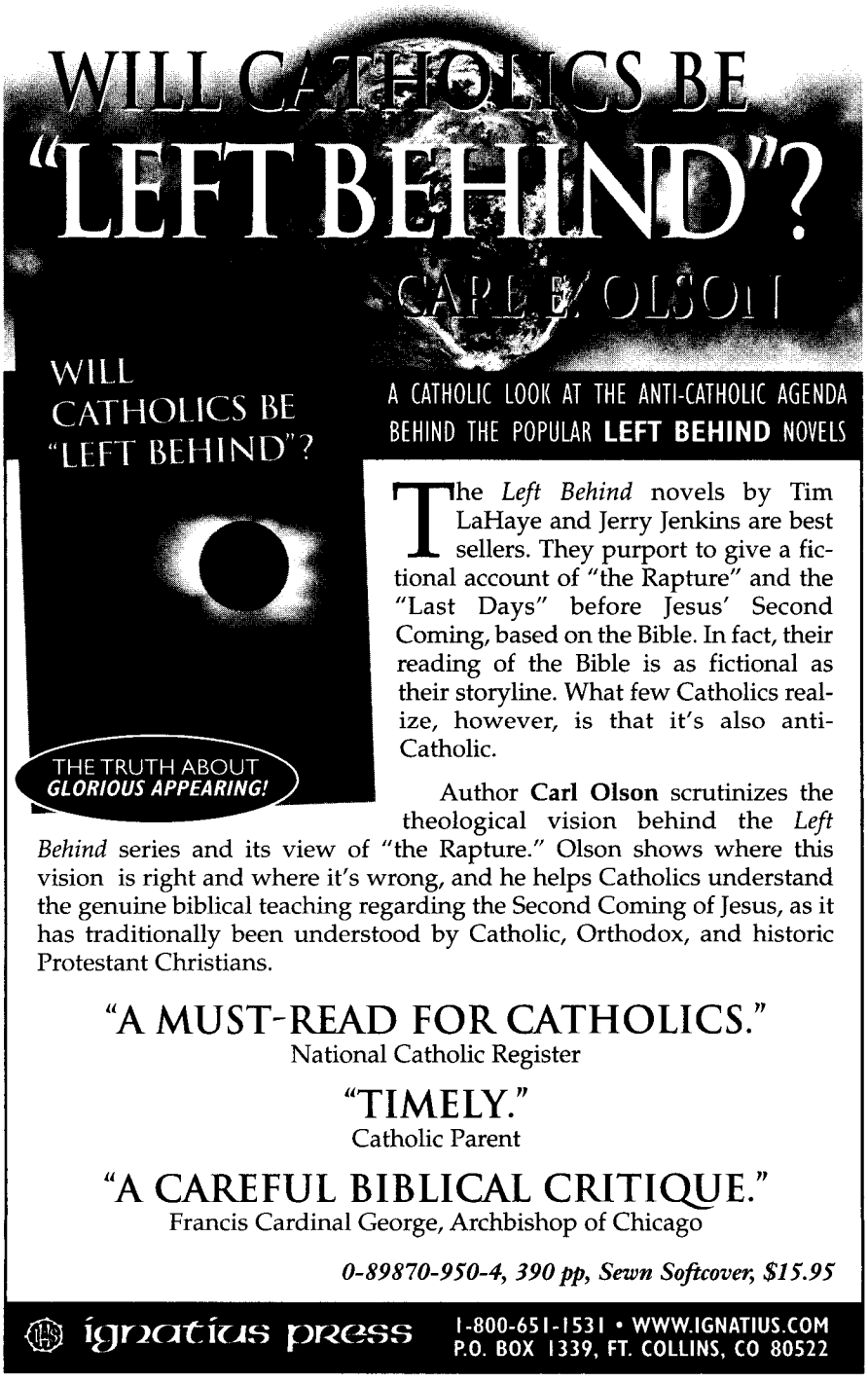
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

presumptive liberty of conscience was championed by Emerson. Brooks neither formulated nor advanced any of these signal themes of Protestant liberalism; rather, he absorbed them. He was, to use his own terminology, a liberal Protestant personality (in our terminology, we might call him a cultural phenomenon), and his preaching and ministry testified to his generation that the new ideas that had captured the imaginations of many could, in fact, be *lived*.

Let us, then, leave the ideas behind for a moment and recognize, as Harp does, that to pursue the logic of Brooks' leading themes will lead only to frustration. Brooks' was a mind well stocked with theological thoughts, but he used them as his architect, Richardson, used the elements of Romanesque idiom in his Trinity Church—with a supple imaginative power that freely modified and arranged in order to achieve an effect. The effect that Brooks sought became the cliché of liberal Protestant seminary theology throughout the twentieth century: a faith for modern man. It is important for us to remember, however, that what is now a very tired cliché was, in Brooks' time, an exciting and unexpected possibility.

The circumstances of Brooks' birth and religious upbringing anticipate his central role in American Christianity. His parents were not particularly rich, but they were both from old New England families and were, by blood, part of elite Boston society. Contemporary readers are not likely to be able to imagine readily the smug self-confidence, the insular social attitudes, and the vast power wielded by the social class that was to earn the name Boston Brahmin, but Harp does an excellent job of inserting us into this exotic world. In the early nineteenth century the introduction of textile technology made eastern Massachusetts the Silicon Valley of its day. Vast fortunes were made and an already wealthy city became the ascendant center of power in the new United States.

This dominant social class was, however, marked by religious crisis, with that great Boston oddity, Unitarianism, constituting a rebellion against traditional Calvinist Congregationalism. It was in this context that Brooks' mother, Mary Ann Phillips Brooks, became disenchanted with the Congregationalism of her ancestors and joined St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Moves like hers were part of a larger social transformation,


WILL CATHOLICS BE "LEFT BEHIND"?
CARL E. OLSON
WILL CATHOLICS BE "LEFT BEHIND"?
THE TRUTH ABOUT GLORIOUS APPEARING!
A CATHOLIC LOOK AT THE ANTI-CATHOLIC AGENDA BEHIND THE POPULAR LEFT BEHIND NOVELS
The Left Behind novels by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins are best sellers. They purport to give a fictional account of "the Rapture" and the "Last Days" before Jesus' Second Coming, based on the Bible. In fact, their reading of the Bible is as fictional as their storyline. What few Catholics realize, however, is that it's also anti-Catholic.
Author Carl Olson scrutinizes the theological vision behind the Left Behind series and its view of "the Rapture." Olson shows where this vision is right and where it's wrong, and he helps Catholics understand the genuine biblical teaching regarding the Second Coming of Jesus, as it has traditionally been understood by Catholic, Orthodox, and historic Protestant Christians.
"A MUST-READ FOR CATHOLICS."
National Catholic Register
"TIMELY."
Catholic Parent
"A CAREFUL BIBLICAL CRITIQUE."
Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago
0-89870-950-4, 390 pp, Sewn Softcover, $15.95
ignatius press
1-800-651-1531 • WWW.IGNATIUS.COM
P.O. BOX 1339, FT. COLLINS, CO 80522

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not only of Boston society but of elite Northeastern culture as a whole, a transformation that her son would embody, articulate, and facilitate with remarkable effectiveness.

The transformation involved, for one thing, a striking change in the fortunes of the Episcopal Church. Never strong in New England prior to the American Revolution, Anglicanism in the decades following independence remained deeply compromised by its past Tory loyalties. But though it had been on the losing side in the Revolution, Anglicanism, reorganized as the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, came to benefit from the social and religious ferment in pre–Civil War New England. The Congregational establishment had given birth to a radical, antidoctrinal movement, and it seemed locked in a fruitless war of attrition. The Episcopal Church flourished as the respectable, nonconflictual, seemingly orthodox alternative.

To a great extent, Phillips Brooks did little more than live out this social dynamic in his personal faith and ministry. His impact as a preacher and leader grew, as we can now see, out of his ability to soften the terms of the religious choices facing American elites. Brooks was greatly influenced by Horace Bushnell, and Harp provides numerous citations from Brooks' correspondence that show him as antipathetic to the doctrinal systems of classical Calvinism. Yet, unlike Bushnell, Brooks did not lay out a systematic case against earlier forms of religiosity. Instead, he painted an alternative that allowed others to adopt Bushnell's more experiential approach without clearly marking the break with the past. The same strategy can be seen in Brooks' assessment of the historical-critical challenges that emerged in the final decades of his life. He affirmed the importance of modern historical inquiry, but he never seems to have allowed the results to pose a religious challenge to those who listened to his sermons.

One of the great strengths of *Brahmin Prophet* is that Harp restrains the altogether understandable impulse to criticize Brooks as a muddle-headed temporizing preacher who was either unaware of, or unwilling to recognize, the erosive consequences of his rhetoric. We can recognize that the emphasis on feeling has produced a remarkable spiritual self-indulgence in institutions such as the contemporary Episcopal

BE PART OF THE CONVERSATION...

Find out about Portsmouth Abbey School – the nation's leading coeducational Catholic boarding school. Unique in its English Benedictine tradition, it offers a challenging academic curriculum rich in mathematics and science and built upon a signature Humanities program.

The campus sits on 550 acres close to Newport, Rhode Island, bordered by Narragansett Bay, providing a safe and welcoming environment for 340 boarding and day students in grades 9 – 12. Added features of Portsmouth Abbey School are its 36 athletic teams, diverse community service programs, and its golf, sailing and equestrian facilities. Given the school's small size, students have the opportunity to become leaders and active members of the community.

Call Geri Zilian, Director of Admissions, at 401.683.2005 ext. 27
or email: admissions@portsmouthabbey.org

PORTSMOUTH ABBEY SCHOOL

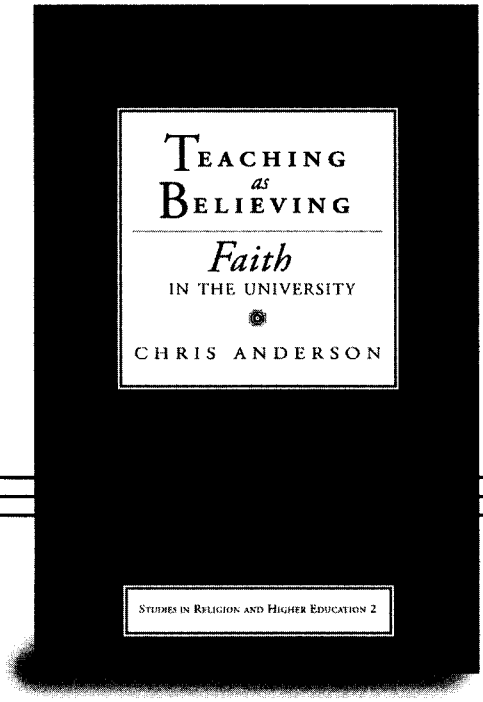
visit our website: *http://admissions.portsmouthabbey.org*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Church. We can see how Brooks' vision of preaching as an expression of "personality" leads to the arrogant posturing of "prophetic" preachers who parade their unreflective progressive sensibilities as oracles of the divine. We can trace the present doctrinal amnesia of now-superannuated Protestant "sideline" churches to Brooks' easy slogan: Preach Christ, not Christianity. Richard John Neuhaus' observation that where orthodoxy becomes optional it will eventually be proscribed is a shrewd diagnosis of the dangers that were present in Brooks' seemingly unrestricted affirmation of the "rights of conscience."

These observations, however, concern the path *from* liberal Protestantism to the post-Christian spiritual ideologies of the present. Phillips Brooks lived in the second half of the nineteenth century, and he helped to light, as Harp's subtitle suggests, the path *to* liberal Protestantism. In that context Brooks, like the Episcopal Church in New England, might be seen, more positively, as a great delayer of the de-Christianization of American elite culture. By smoothing the hard edges of controversy he made avoidable in his generation and the next a choice that was looming for many who shared his education and social status: either the demanding Calvinism of their ancestors or the equally harsh rationalism of post-Christian secular thought. The blurring of alternatives and postponement of decision made possible what sociologists came to call the Protestant Establishment, that now-vanished but once powerful social consensus among ruling elites in America. In truth, the emergent Protestant liberalism that Brooks did so much to nurture may never have had any real future before it, if we may judge by its subsequent career. In our day, the artful, emotive reinterpretations of doctrine in liberal Protestantism that Brooks so effectively pioneered have metastasized into a positive animus against apostolic Christianity.

On the visit to Trinity Church that I mentioned above, I found an aroma of orthodoxy about the worship (solemn procession, conventional hymns, dignified liturgy), while the sermon seemed to be seeking the classic Brooksian goal: faith for modern men and women. The difference between our time and Brooks', however, is that the strategy of delay has run it course. Our elite culture has been de-Christianized, and the notional faith that I heard preached from the



Teaching as Believing
Studies in Religion and Higher Education 2
Chris Anderson
Professor of English
Oregon State University

...an extraordinary book.
It is a seamless weave of intellect and love that honors the highest standards of the academic vocation and the deepest needs of the human heart.
It is a book for everyone who cares about higher education and its historic mission, a book that is as much about how we live as how we teach and learn.

Parker J. Palmer

Baylor University Press

800 710-3217 • baylorpress.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pulpit in Trinity that day amounted to pure concession, Unitarianism in vestments.

HOW, THEN, SHOULD we balance the accounts? For all my bitterness over the contemporary betrayals committed by his deformed spiritual children, I am inclined to look kindly on Brooks. He made a signal contribution to a form of American Christianity that kept the ugliest forms of modernism at bay in our culture: Emerson's latent Nietzschean mysticism of the will, social Darwinism, raw utilitarianism, Marxism, and more. The public square was even then, perhaps, ill-clothed, but it was not yet naked. A pallid Christian humanism, but Christian humanism nonetheless, was a real possibility. I am convinced that one might reasonably conclude that the influence of Phillips Brooks made it possible for Reinhold Niebuhr to reach such a broad audience in the perilous middle decades of the twentieth century.

Now we are at a turning point. We can look for no figure such as Niebuhr to put backbone into liberal Protestantism. It is dead and cannot be revived, because it loves its own death. Nonetheless, the choices we make will determine our future views of that great temporizing, muddled religious phenomenon called liberal Protestantism. If we should decide to hearken to John Paul II's vision of the relationship between personality and truth, and to the Christian humanism outlined in his encyclicals, then we might one day look back and judge the hapless errings of liberal Protestantism to have been more quixotic than demonic. In that event, Brooks and his strategy of delay could be seen as having at least preserved a Christian possibility for other, more confident and vital voices of the gospel to inhabit.

The Science of Wishful Thinking

WHOSE VIEW OF LIFE? EMBRYOS, CLONING, AND STEM CELLS. By JANE MAIENSCHEIN. *Harvard University Press. 342 pp. $27.95.*

Reviewed by Maureen L. Condic

THE QUESTION OF when human life commences is one of longstanding philosophical and scientific interest. In our day it has been thrust into the realm of immediate urgency by advances in embryonic stem cell and cloning technologies. The question is taken up by Jane Maienschein in *Whose View of Life?* The book examines the matter principally from a historical perspective, asking how scientific, secular, and (to a lesser extent) religious views about the onset of life have changed over time as the scientific understanding of embryonic development has expanded.

Maienschein is a well-published writer in the history of science, and this book has been warmly welcomed by many. *Publishers Weekly* says the "book should be required reading," Garland Allen calls it "essential reading," Jonathan Weiner describes it as "timely, sensible, and clearheaded," and in a very friendly interview with the author

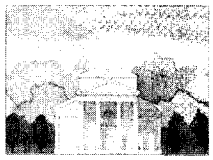
MAUREEN L. CONDIC *is an Associate Professor of Neurobiology and Anatomy at the University of Utah; she is currently conducting research on the regeneration of embryonic and adult neurons following spinal cord injury.*

Director of Development

Catholic liberal arts College seeks a self-motivated, results-oriented individual to raise funds for a beautiful chapel designed by Duncan Stroik — requiring commitments totaling $2.3 million. Other projects will follow. Competitive salary and benefits.

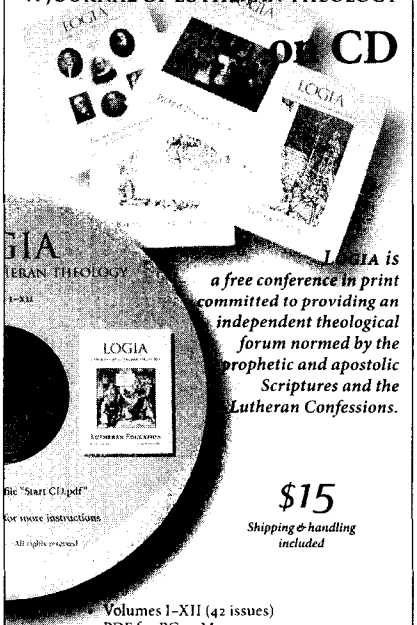
The individual will work with the President and Board of Trustees to:
- Survey potential donors
- Develop short-term and long-term fundraising plan
- Design promotional materials
- Solicit major donors
- Write monthly newsletter

For more information please call Joseph Monaghan (202) 321-1435 or email your resume to: jmonaghan@thomasmorecollege.edu



The Thomas More College of Liberal Arts
www.thomasmorecollege.edu

LOGIA
A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY



LOGIA is a free conference in print committed to providing an independent theological forum normed by the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

$15
Shipping & handling included

Volumes I–XII (42 issues)
- PDF for PC or Mac
- Colored for better screen viewing
- Linked—including endnotes—and bookmarked
- Indexed for simple and advanced searches

To order, include name, address, phone number and payment by check, money order or Visa/MasterCard.

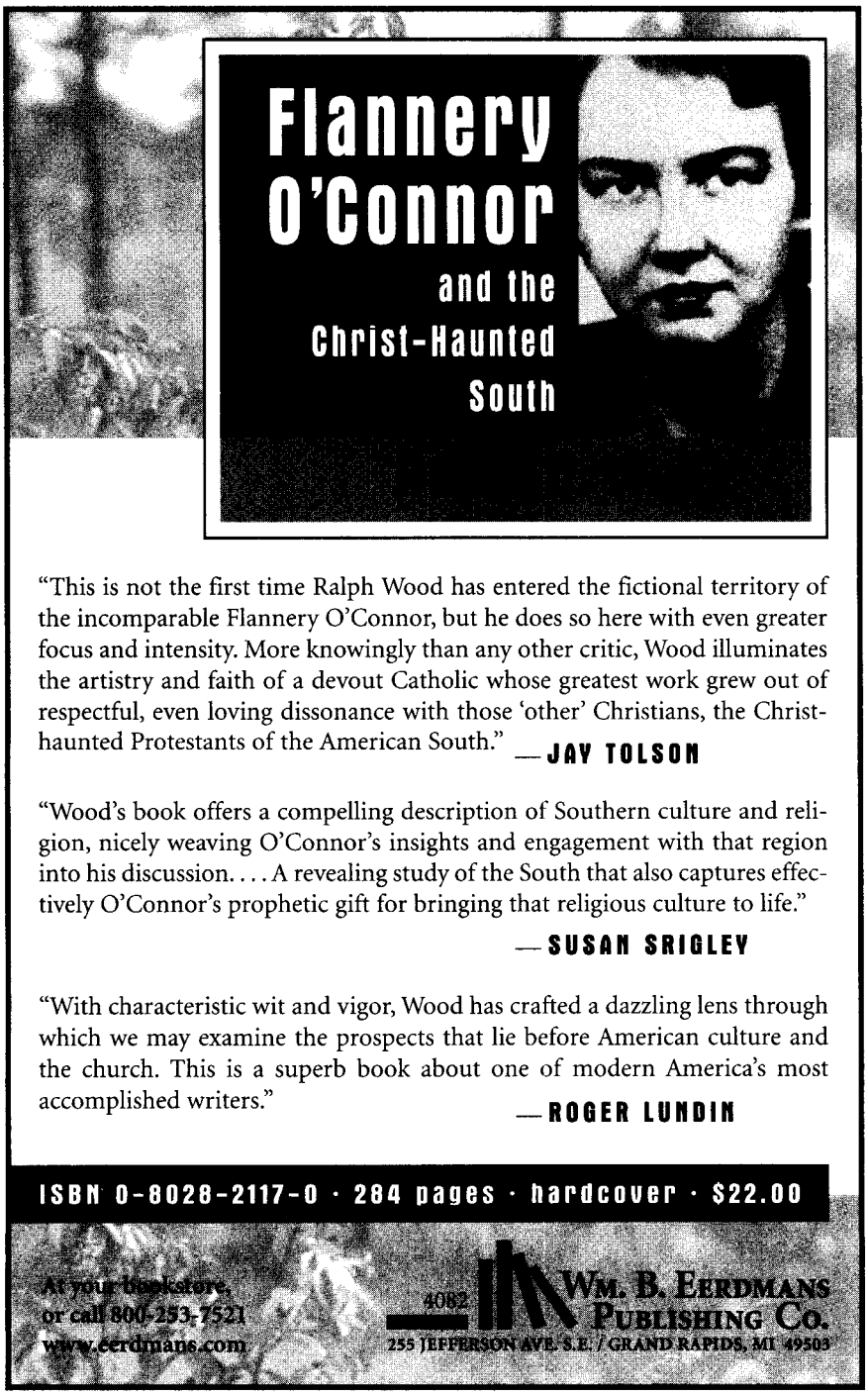
Phone ❖ 605-887-3145
E-mail ❖ logia2@nvc.net
Fax ❖ 605-887-3129
Mail ❖ 15825 373rd Ave., Northville, SD 57465
Visit our web site at **www logia.org**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

posted on the New York Academy of Sciences website she is praised her for a perspective that "casts doubt on the certainties of anti-research thinkers." In her introduction, Maienschein declares that she will take a balanced and neutral look at "how to define when a life begins and what the appropriate boundaries and constraints on human embryo research should be."

This is a worthy goal, but one finds that balance and neutrality are not evident in the product of her efforts. Though she is an historian of science, there are serious problems with her presentation of both history and science, and in the end she settles the question of her title by appealing to the self-evident correctness of her own preferred answer: we are to resolve the question of when life begins by rejecting the "extremism and absolutism" of those who believe life begins at conception, and by cleaving instead to the "wisdom" of "meta-experts" (these are apparently academic historians of science). Such meta-experts will help us to "forge a compromise explicitly responding to our best science and our best moral thinking." The reader will note that it is a curious sort of "compromise" that explicitly denies any role for the "extremism and absolutism" of those who reject Maienschein's own viewpoint.

The majority of the book deals with the history of thought about human embryonic development, beginning with the views of Aristotle and proceeding in rough chronological order to the present day. The presentation of historic viewpoints is at times inexplicably disjointed. (Why, for example, are topics as divergent as Mendel's genetic experiments with pea plants, the eugenics movement of the early 1900s, and the cloning of frogs all covered in a single chapter?). Yet the text is still reasonably informative and entertaining. A major theme that emerges from Maienschein's historical studies is that two opposing opinions on the origins of human life have coexisted since ancient times. One is the "preformationist" view, which asserts that life is present in some form from the earliest stages of development (the modern form of this view being the belief that life begins at conception). The other is the "epigenesist" view, which asserts that life comes into existence gradually over time. Maienschein would have us believe that these


Flannery O'Connor
and the Christ-Haunted South
"This is not the first time Ralph Wood has entered the fictional territory of the incomparable Flannery O'Connor, but he does so here with even greater focus and intensity. More knowingly than any other critic, Wood illuminates the artistry and faith of a devout Catholic whose greatest work grew out of respectful, even loving dissonance with those 'other' Christians, the Christ-haunted Protestants of the American South." — JAY TOLSON
"Wood's book offers a compelling description of Southern culture and religion, nicely weaving O'Connor's insights and engagement with that region into his discussion. . . . A revealing study of the South that also captures effectively O'Connor's prophetic gift for bringing that religious culture to life." — SUSAN SRIGLEY
"With characteristic wit and vigor, Wood has crafted a dazzling lens through which we may examine the prospects that lie before American culture and the church. This is a superb book about one of modern America's most accomplished writers." — ROGER LUNDIN
ISBN 0-8028-2117-0 · 284 pages · hardcover · $22.00
At your bookstore, or call 800-253-7521
www.eerdmans.com
4082
WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

two views have come down more or less intact to the present and that understanding the changing historical preeminence of one position versus the other enables us to see that the question of when life begins is finally unresolvable.

YET MAIENSCHEIN'S historical presentation is flawed in important ways. While maintaining ostensive neutrality regarding the relative merits of the preformationist and epigenesist views, Maienschein indulges in a less than even-handed characterization of these two positions. Modern-day preformationists (those who believe life begins at conception) are "absolutists" who hold "extremist" views that are "vague and unsustainable" but who advance these views as "immutable, without possibility of compromise or accommodation," and thereby contribute to "the politics of hate." By contrast, even highly dogmatic statements by proponents of the epigenesist view are not similarly condemned. For example, Michael West, the president and CEO of Advanced Cell Technology, is quoted as saying: "You can't say that making and destroying a preimplantation embryo is the destruction of a human. Because it isn't. If it was a human life, I wouldn't touch it. Absolutely not. A human individual does not begin at conception. It begins at primitive-streak formation." (The "primitive streak" forms approximately fourteen days after fertilization and marks the beginning of a period during which cells of the embryo organize into three primary tissue types.)

Clearly, an opinion as strong as West's could be fairly described as "immutable, without the possibility of compromise or accommodation," but Maienschein presents this statement without qualification and goes on to laud West for his conviction that "the research must go forward." Similarly, the inflammatory advice of Nobel Prize–winner James Watson about embryonic stem cell research—"We've got to go ahead and not worry whether we're going to offend some fundamentalist from Tulsa, Oklahoma"—is presented without comment; Watson is not charged with advancing "the politics of hate." This is hardly a balanced and neutral look at today's debate.

Maienschein's exposition of scientific information (particularly modern findings) is similarly biased. Considerable factual inaccu-

From our Catalogue

What is Political Science?

The abiding problem of politics is ordering the conditions of life in a humanly satisfying way through the creation of objectively effective and subjectively meaningful institutions. Political order is constituted by symbols which represent what is conceived as the truth about the world and our nature as a part within it. The substance of political existence is psyche and hence the discourse that arises from it will always be hermeneutic. Political society is the space we create as historical beings through spiritual freedom. In political existence, institutions replace instinct and meaning replaces need. Political activity is a human vocation common to all. It cannot be avoided and must be responded to. It is the weakness of modern political consciousness to think that we can be so transformed as to be delivered from history while acting in history, and from political concerns while living in political society, or that the desperate modern situation renders political activity worthless. Mature political wisdom knows that neither history nor fate can be bypassed.

The Thomas More College of Liberal Arts was founded in 1978 by Catholic educators and emphasizes a return to the sources. College President and co-founder Peter V. Sampo, Ph.D. is available to lecture on *The Renewal of Christian Culture through Catholic Higher Education.*

800-880-8308
www.thomasmorecollege.edu
MERRIMACK, NH & ROME, ITALY

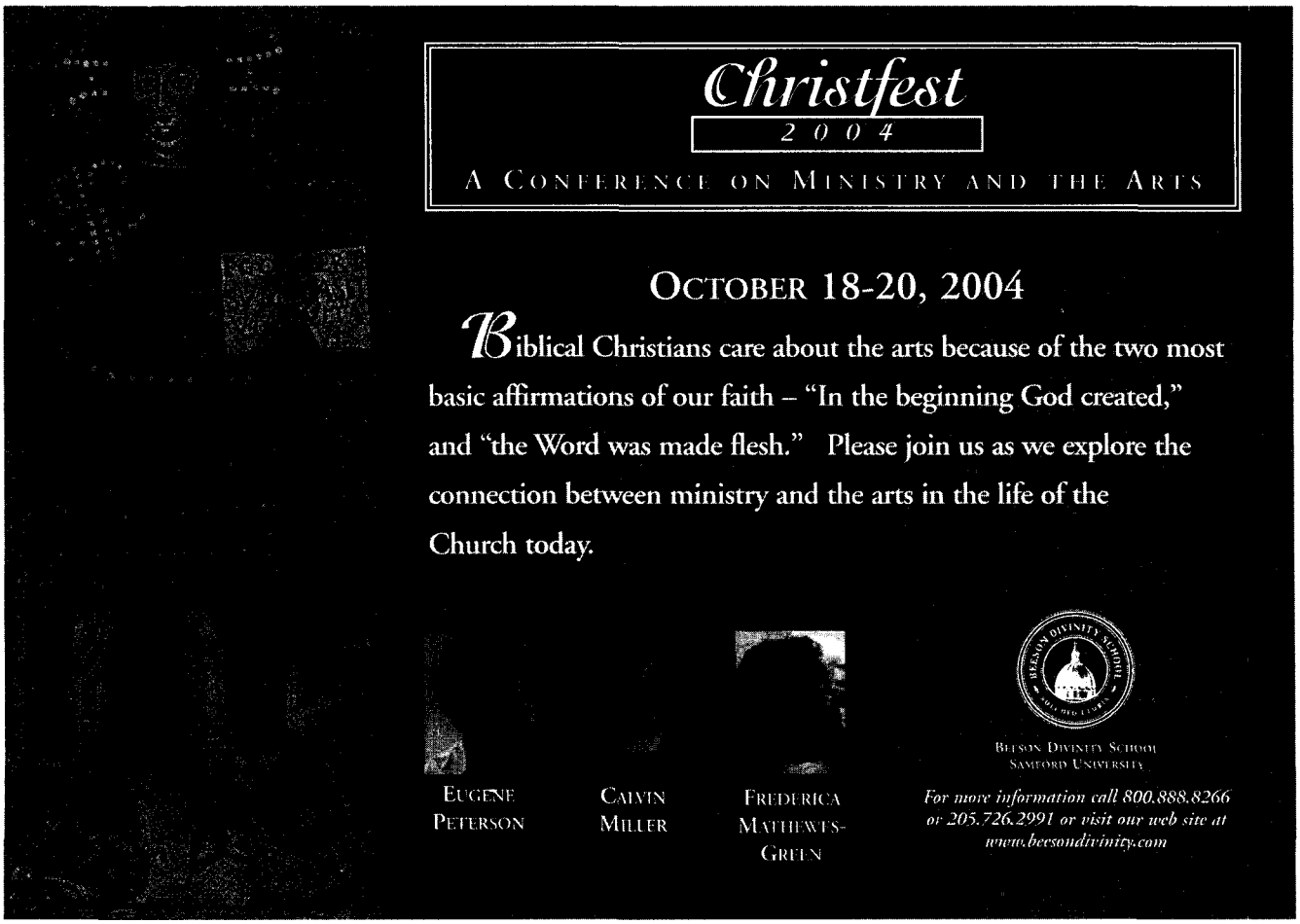
The Thomas More College of Liberal Arts

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

racy and distortion arise from Maienschein's selective omission of scientific findings that cast a less than kindly light on embryonic stem cell and cloning research. It is notable, for example, that despite devoting an entire chapter to the topic of cloning, Maienschein glosses over the well-established and significant fact that the vast majority of cloned animals either die before birth or are physically and genetically abnormal. This fact certainly calls into question the wisdom of using such abnormal cells for the therapeutic treatment of human disease. Similarly, despite the promisingly even-handed title of her final chapter, "Hopes and Hypes for Stem Cells," Maienschein fails to discuss the well-established drawbacks of using embryonic stem cells for therapeutic purposes (See my article, "The Basics About Stem Cells," FT January 2002). The effect of these omissions is to present embryonic stem cell and cloning research as therapeutically promising technologies that are uncompromised by significant scientific limitations. The best that can be said for such a presentation is that it is disingenuous.

Maienschein's portrayal of history also suffers from a number of conceptual flaws. Maienschein paints a picture of the historic debate over when life begins as a series of inconclusive battles between the preformationist and epigenesist views, a continuing controversy in which neither position has achieved clear victory. She goes on to argue that, because the available science has sometimes favored one view and sometimes the other, science will never resolve the debate. She concludes that while we must take scientific information into account, science itself cannot define the beginning of life.

This picture is interesting, but it is also profoundly inaccurate. Maienschein's argument explicitly denies the possibility of real advance in science and falsely suggests that the question of when life begins is simply beyond the realm of scientific inquiry. On the contrary, the historical facts strongly argue that although there were limitations in scientific understanding and method that precluded a clear resolution of this question in previous eras, such limitations no longer exist. While the inability to "look inside" the womb may have led early scientists to favor the epigenesist view that life gradually comes into existence from inanimate matter, we simply know bet-


Christfest
2004
A Conference on Ministry and the Arts
October 18-20, 2004
Biblical Christians care about the arts because of the two most basic affirmations of our faith – "In the beginning God created," and "the Word was made flesh." Please join us as we explore the connection between ministry and the arts in the life of the Church today.
Eugene Peterson
Calvin Miller
Frederica Mathewes-Green
Beeson Divinity School
Samford University
For more information call 800.888.8266 or 205.726.2991 or visit our web site at www.beesondivinity.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ter today. Once we came to understand that embryos arise from the fusion of living sperm and egg cells, the debate over spontaneous generation of embryos from inanimate seminal and vaginal fluids was *forever* closed to serious scientific discussion. Real and substantive progress has been made, and in no circumstances will further research prove capable of causing our understanding to revert to a disproved concept.

Suggestive comparisons may, of course, be made between earlier epigenesist-preformationist controversies and our current debate over when life commences, but such comparisons do not "inform" the current debate in any meaningful sense. Indeed, they have *no* bearing on the real issue, which is whether our current scientific understanding substantively and permanently resolves this question. The modern discussion of when life commences must proceed from the answer to following question: Given what we know with certainty, what type of new information is it currently possible for us to discover—and could such information substantively change our present understanding of early embryonic development?

What we know with certainty, despite Maienschein's insistence that the "jury is still out," is that the facts inarguably support the preformationist view she so vehemently rejects. We know, for example, that single-cell embryos are unambiguously organisms, for the defining feature of an organism, as compared to a simple collection of cells, is that it is "organized" to accomplish a "purpose" that exceeds mere cellular life. Talking about "purpose" may make some readers (including some scientists and perhaps some historians of science) nervous, yet in the context of developmental biology, an organismal "purpose" means nothing more than the playing out of a game plan that we know, by observation, results in the formation of increasingly complex, integrated structures, all of which work together for the continued life and health of that organism as a whole. Embryos manifestly behave as organisms and as nothing other than organisms from the single-cell stage onward. This conclusion is true today, will be true forever in the future, and will at no point be subject to substantial revision by further scientific research or discoveries.

Theology of the Body

Sam Torode

Christopher West

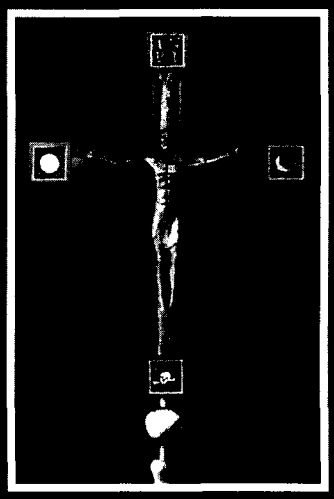
Vol. 1 *Body and Gift*
Hardcover / 65 pages / $10.95
ISBN 0-9725358-1-0

"This work is an excellent reflection on the human person and the gift of life."
— Senator Rick Santorum

Vol. 2 *Purity of Heart*
Hardcover / 95 pages / $13.95
ISBN 0-9725358-2-9

www.philokaliabooks.com

THE
WYSONG
COMPANY INC.
Art and Design
in the Spirit of Worship®



Cross for the Papal Mass in Central Park, N.Y.C.

Liturgical Consultation and Design.
Painting, Sculpture and Stained Glass.
Fine Furnishings and Appointments.
Murals and Mosaics.
Temporary Installations.

(212) 995-1775
448 East 20th Street 7A
New York, New York 10009

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Maienschein, like many other proponents of using stem cells from embryos as research material, denies the organismal nature of single-cell embryos by simply asserting the opposite. However, such denial is contrafactual. Maienschein states, for example, that single-cell embryos *only* function as "cells dividing into other cells that are just like them." This assertion is patently absurd; single-cell human embryos ultimately produce babies, not merely multiple copies of themselves. Early embryos can be destroyed to yield embryonic stem (ES) cells that do indeed simply reproduce themselves, yet once the embryo is destroyed, the cells that once composed it lose their organismal character. If early embryos are nothing more than ES cells, and if human organisms "spontaneously" come into existence at some later developmental stage (the primitive-streak stage, for example), then embryos and ES cells should be interchangeable. That is to say, it should be fully possible to aggregate ES cells together and reconstitute an embryo that will develop into a normal baby. The fact that embryos cannot be "made" from ES cells alone demonstrates that ES cells are qualitatively different from embryos. ES cells are "organized" to the purpose of maintaining and replicating cellular life, but not to the purpose of generating a baby.

Aristotle, of course, knew nothing of single-cell embryos or ES cells, but an Aristotelian distinction between the two can be made quite clearly: the single-cell embryo fully possesses a substantial form that is organized toward the generation of increasingly complex systems, ultimately culminating in an adult individual, whereas the ES cell possesses a qualitatively different substantial form that is organized toward the maintenance of cellular life and generation of other cells like itself. (Maienschein's apparent confusion of accidental form and substantial form causes her to erroneously assign Aristotle to the epigenesist side of the debate, thus lending that side a somewhat more distinguished pedigree than it deserves.) The radical difference in kind between ES cells and embryos exists from the earliest stages of embryonic development and does not magically come into existence at the primitive-streak stage—regardless of how convenient such a mystical event might be for the argumentation of those who favor doing research on early human embryos.

The ultimate issue for Maienschein is not so much when life begins; it is, rather, when do we as a pluralistic society choose to value and defend life? Maienschein believes that human life is worthy of defense at some point and that our definition of when human life begins should be informed by scientific evidence. Yet she also believes that research on human embryos is valuable and should therefore be allowed to proceed. To reconcile these beliefs, Maienschein ultimately rejects the scientific facts regarding when life begins and resorts to the purely utilitarian argument that human life is valuable and worthy of protection so long as some other goal (in this case the hope of curing human disease by destroying human embryos) does not exceed the value she personally chooses to assign to human life at a given developmental stage. The answer to her question "Whose view of life?" turns out to be "Maienschein's." Society's interests will be better served by answering the question of when life begins by appealing to scientific fact.

THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham, UK
Graduate Institute for Theology and Religion

Postgraduate Studies in Inter-religious Relations

(External Registration Possibilities)

Enquiries:

Dr. David Cheetham
Graduate Institute for Theology and Religion
University of Birmingham
Elmfield House, Bristol Road
Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6LQ, UK
Tel: +44 (0)121 415 8335
Fax: +44(0)121 415 8376
e-mail: d.cheetham@bham.ac.uk
http://www.theology.bham.ac.uk/postgrad/interrel/

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Rationalism and Reform

WHO RULES IN SCIENCE? AN OPINIONATED GUIDE TO THE WARS. By JAMES ROBERT BROWN. *Harvard University Press. 256 pp. $16.95 paper.*

Reviewed by Michael J. Behe

Who Rules in Science? is a marvelous book that ranges from the most basic questions to the most contentious: the author considers not only how we should use reason to estimate truth but also how we should apply reason to public policy. His unhelpful handling of the second topic does not at all detract from his successful illumination of the first. On the contrary, his inconsistency is a useful reminder that one can know the value of reason without always being able to apply it properly.

MICHAEL J. BEHE *is Professor of Biochemistry at Lehigh University.*

The author, James Robert Brown, is a philosopher of mathematics at the University of Toronto. He wrote the book primarily to defend reason and objectivity in science but secondarily to persuade his allies on the political left that science can be their friend. Brown begins by adverting to the notorious Sokal hoax.

In 1996 the editors of the academic journal *Social Text* published an essay by New York University physicist Alan Sokal entitled "Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity." In opaque postmodern prose, the essay claimed to show how even gravity is nothing but a social construct. Soon thereafter Sokal revealed in another journal that he had made up the whole thing out of pomo patter and thin air; physics had nothing to do with it. The hoax got a lot of press, and once the horselaughs had died away the lesson most people took from it was the emptiness of postmodern criticism of science. But Sokal (whose paper pointed out that he lectured "during the Sandinista government, at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua") averred that he intended the escapade to shake the left out of its attachment to unavailing intellectual fluff so that it could become a more effective political force. Brown, with this book, also wants to help the left toward that goal.

Much of *Who Rules in Science?* is a

Literature • Economics • Music

Logos

A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture

An interdisciplinary journal written
from a Catholic perspective.

1-800-444-2419

www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/Logo

UNIVERSITY of ST. THOMAS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

primer in the history and philosophy of science. Scientists and other naïfs often think that science proceeds in a linear fashion, steadily accumulating data, refining theories, and improving its understanding of the world. But even a brief trip through science history shows that progress can scarcely be called linear. For example, sun-centered astronomy replaced earth-centered, oxygen superseded phlogiston, and absolute space gave way to curved space. Brown roasts Nobel-laureate physicist Steven Weinberg for his confident affirmation that no matter what other differences we may have with intelligent space aliens if and when we meet them, we will find that they have discovered the same scientific laws that we have. "It's hard to imagine anything less likely to be true," huffs Brown, noting that we humans haven't even had the same laws throughout our own history. "There are so many accidents, so many little things that affect the course of intellectual life, that it is extremely unlikely that two unconnected intellectual communities would have identical histories."

For perspective, Brown gives the reader a Cook's tour of the major modern schools of thought in the philosophy of science. He contrasts rationalism with empiricism, discusses Popper, Kuhn, and logical positivism, and gives the ins and outs of Bayes' Theorem. Do things such as atoms actually exist? How about electrons? The vector field? Gravitons? (Answers: Yes. Yes. Maybe. It depends.) Does science really describe reality, or just delineate observable regularities? Brown shows just enough of the complexities to demonstrate that it isn't easy to figure out exactly how science works.

The book then turns to its main topic—"social constructivists," the chief belligerents in the "wars" of Brown's subtitle, who think that science reflects social forces, rather than the results of reason applied to evidence. The main difference between constructivists and other schools of critical thought, says Brown, does not concern whether science actually describes reality (other groups have also argued that it does not). Rather, the critical difference is whether science can be epistemically objective—whether reason and evidence can actually be employed to understand or discover the truth about the world.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM comes in a variety of flavors, which Brown sorts into two main categories that he calls the nihilist wing and the naturalist wing. The easily lampooned postmodernists—the folks who were stung by Sokal's high jinks—comprise the nihilist wing. As Brown tells

"Austin Farrer...possibly the greatest Anglican mind of the twentieth century."
— Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury

CAPTURED BY THE CRUCIFIED

A Conference and Spiritual Life Workshop Celebrating Austin Farrer's Lived Theology in the Centenary Year of His Birth

November 4-7, 2004

The St. James Center for Spiritual Formation at St. James Episcopal Church
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

PRESENTERS INCLUDE: David Brown, Van Mildert Professor of Divinity, University of Durham; Ann Loades, CBE, Professor of Divinity, University of Durham; Diogenes Allen, Princeton Theological Seminary; David Hein, Hood College

For registration and additional program information, contact:

www.stjamescsf.org

St. James Center for Spiritual Formation
P.O. Box 126, Baton Rouge, LA 70821
Ph. 225-387-5141 — Fax 225-387-1443

The Culture of Life Foundation and Institute

is accepting applications for Fellowships

We invite college and university professors and other professionals with established records of scholarship to apply for appointments as non-resident Fellows.

The Fellows will actively support the work and mission of the Culture of Life Foundation and Institute through scholarly research, lectures, publishing and journalism. Fellows will also represent the Foundation in the media, and before governmental bodies – state, federal, and international.

Fellows will be named for up to three-year terms. One Fellow will be named in each of the following disciplines: law, science, medicine and ethics. This program does not support work toward the completion of a degree.

To apply or for further information please contact:

Austin Ruse, President
Culture of Life Foundation and Institute
1413 K Street, NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20005
www.colfi.org
202-289-2500

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it, this group is hostile to science and is characterized by its antirationality, rejection of objective truth, and perspectivalism (the claim that accounts of science or history can be given only from local perspectives). What's more, they seem not to understand the science they criticize.

The more interesting branch for Brown is the naturalist wing, which pictures itself not only as friendly to science but, indeed, as rigorously applying the scientific method to the task of accounting for science itself. It is exemplified by David Bloor, whose "strong programme" in the sociology of scientific knowledge demands sociological explanations not only for questions such as why a certain scientist was interested in a particular problem but also for the content of scientific theories. Here is an example that Brown provides: physicists were in bad odor in Germany after World War I when German society turned away from a mechanical worldview and toward mysticism. According to a constructivist account, German scientists then developed the noncausal, nondeterministic, rather mystical theory of quantum mechanics in order to win back their high social standing. So quantum mechanics was generated by social ambition rather than by reason.

Brown asserts in reply that the constructivists aren't consistent. First, though they claim that science (and all other knowledge) is a social fabrication, they don't treat their own argument in the same way. The physicists' facts are supposedly constructed, but the constructivists' facts (for example, that German society did actually turn from mechanism to mysticism) are taken to be really true. What's more, says Brown, even on the social constructivists' own account those German physicists are behaving quite rationally—it's just that they have a different goal from the one usually ascribed to them. If the physicists are actually aiming for better social standing, they are taking perfectly logical steps to achieve their goal. Finally, according to Brown, the constructivist account of the development of quantum mechanics is not in any way simpler or more powerfully explanatory than a rational account that would go something like the following: the older quantum theory of Bohr was not completely coherent; the new theory of Heisenberg accounted for the Zeeman effect and other anomalous phenomena; and so physicists accepted the new quantum theory.

That doesn't seem so hard to see.

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

DIVINE COMEDIANS

THE REDEMPTIVE POWER OF HUMOR

2005 ART & SOUL FESTIVAL

THURSDAY, APRIL 7 – SATURDAY, APRIL 9
BAYLOR UNIVERSITY, WACO, TEXAS

THEME: Humor is one of the most sublime of the divine gifts. It enables us to embrace hope in the darkest times, display grace under pressure and – on occasion – tweak the high and mighty. The great creative artists bear witness to the transcendent quality of humor as a means of redemption, sometimes in bold, lavish strokes, sometimes in a still, small voice, but always revealing the surprising, unpredictable joy of God's providential goodness. Humor, tragicomedy, wit, satire, and even folly – all are fitting subjects for exploration and celebration in the Christian community.

PROGRAM GUESTS: The fifth biennial Art & Soul Festival will include public lectures and readings, writing workshops, panels, lecture-recitals, art exhibits, concerts and a scholarly conference. Featured artists will be Kaye Gibbons (*Ellen Foster, Divining Women*), Madison Smartt Bell (*Doctor Sleep, Master of the Crossroads, All Souls Rising*), Lauren Winner (*Girl Meets God: A Memoir, Mudhouse Sabbath*), Charlene Baumbich (*Dearest Dorothy, Are We There Yet?, Mama Said There'd Be Days Like This*), Robert Flynn (*Growing Up Sullen Baptist, The Devil's Tiger*), Michele Andrea Bowen (*Church Folk. Second Sunday: A Novel*), Jeremy Begbie (*Beholding the Glory: Incarnation Through the Arts, Voicing Creation's Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts*), and Phyllis Tickle (*Greed: The Seven Deadly Sins, What the Land Already Knows*) among others.

SUBMISSIONS: We welcome proposals for individual or panel presentations related to this theme, more generally addressing religion and the arts, or involving creative works by those of faith or dealing with issues of faith. Abstracts will be accepted between September 15 and November 15, 2004. Abstracts should not be more than 750 words and should include title, author, position, institution, mailing address, e-mail address and telephone.

SEND ABSTRACTS TO **IFL@baylor.edu**
OR BY MAIL TO:
ATTN: ART & SOUL FESTIVAL
BAYLOR INSTITUTE FOR FAITH AND LEARNING
ONE BEAR PLACE #97270
WACO, TX 76798-7270

(254) 710-4805
SEE **www.baylor.edu/Rel_Lit**
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

art & soul
BAYLOR
UNIVERSITY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

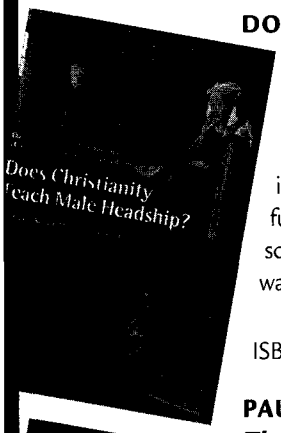
So why do constructivists give such convoluted, implausible, and inconsistent accounts? Here's where we cut to the chase. Brown call them the naturalist school of social constructivism because they are firmly committed to naturalism—that is to say, materialism. The naturalist school of constructivism views the world as containing only matter and energy, so any account of science has to be utterly naturalistic. Brown remarks, "This is just science as usual. Like other naturalists, social constructivists . . . give no credence to religious or platonic or any other sort of nonnatural explanation of science (or, indeed, of anything)." Besides social accounts, they also happily accept evolutionary and other naturalistic explanations.

What they don't accept as valid explanations are reasons. Reasons cannot enter into constructivist explanations because reasons are nonmaterial, no more real than unicorns, and so cannot be causes. But, Brown argues, the constructivists quickly paint themselves into a corner. While rationalists (who accept reasons as causes) can happily admit that many human actions are motivated by nonrational factors, the constructivists by their own logic cannot cite reasons as causes for anything at all, not even for one little thing—no more than an atheist can allow just one or two little miracles. It is not only that full-blown theories cannot be based on reason; neither can minor decisions about what experiment to run, which chemical to use, or what button to push. If social climbing started quantum mechanics, what social factor made a physicist flip switch A instead of B? If he flips switch A for a reason, why can't a physicist be persuaded of quantum mechanics by a reason?

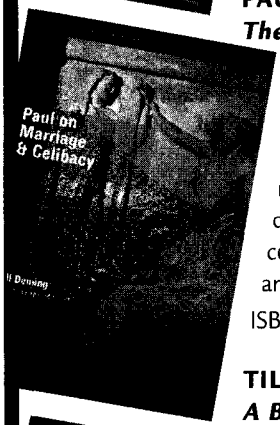
Although he says he is an atheist, Brown affirms that reasons can be causes. This is because, like some other mathematicians, Brown is a Platonist and believes in a nonmaterial realm beyond space and time where concepts such as "triangle" and "magnetic field" actually exist. He has argued in a previous book, *Smoke and Mirrors: How Science Reflects Reality* (1994), that our minds can catch a glimpse of these platonic forms, particularly in scientific thought experiments.

TO THE EXTENT that he persuades his associates on the political left that reason is necessary for effective action, Brown will have done them a profound service. (Recently Bruno Latour, a primary target of Brown's,

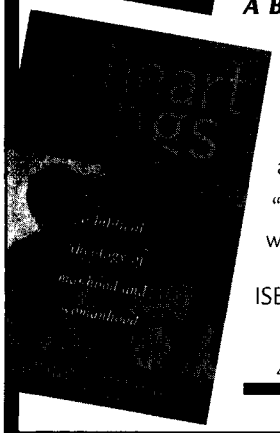
Recent Books *from* Eerdmans



DOES CHRISTIANITY TEACH MALE HEADSHIP?
The Equal-Regard Marriage and Its Critics
David Blankenhorn, Don Browning, and **Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen,** editors
"This book casts brilliant new light on the long-troubling issue of male headship in the family. If the book doesn't fully resolve the issue, it certainly presents a first-class scholarly debate and provides everything a reader would want to know in order to have a reasoned opinion."
– DAVID POPENOE
ISBN 0-8028-2171-5 · 157 pages · paperback · $15.00



PAUL ON MARRIAGE AND CELIBACY
The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7
SECOND EDITION
Will Deming
Foreword by **Raymond F. Collins**
"What a boon to have this landmark study available in a new, updated edition! This guarantees that the debate over the nature and meaning of Christian asceticism and celibacy will continue to benefit from Deming's meticulous arguments and sound conclusions." – JOUETTE BASSLER
ISBN 0-8028-3989-4 · 293 pages · paperback · $28.00



TILL THE HEART SINGS
A Biblical Theology of Manhood and Womanhood
Samuel Terrien
Foreword by **Phyllis Trible**
Sweeping yet selective in scope, this new edition of *Till the Heart Sings* makes available again Samuel Terrien's rich, acclaimed study of the biblical witness to personhood.
"One of those rare books that ought to be read by anyone who deals with Scripture or sexuality."
– *THEOLOGY TODAY*
ISBN 0-8028-2237-1 · 284 pages · paperback · $24.00

4019 WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49503

At your bookstore, or call 800-253-7521 · www.eerdmans.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seems to have had second thoughts about deconstructing science.) But Brown's standard of argument seems to go south in a hurry when he exchanges physics for politics in his last two chapters (and at scattered spots throughout the book), for he seems astonishingly unsophisticated in applying reason to politics. At first I thought maybe it was my fault—that because I am not sympathetic to many of his goals I was resisting his usual strong reasoning. But consider this example of Brown as political scientist. Seeking to explain the development of big brains in humans, male scientists advanced a "man-the-hunter" hypothesis (hunting requires a lot of planning), but a woman scientist came up with a "woman-the-gatherer" hypothesis (gathering requires a lot of planning). Thus, says Brown, we see that people of different types and backgrounds might come up with different hypotheses, with new things that hadn't been thought of before. He concludes that the government should "impose 'affirmative action' policies on the scientific community. This is a very political act, but one that will result, paradoxically, in more objective science."

In like manner, Brown opines on the death penalty, health insurance, and representative versus direct democracy. But to keep the focus on science and reason and public policy, let me offer just two of his recommendations in that area. One is that scientists should disclose their income level in science publications, so as to avoid class conflicts of interest. Another—and here is his best answer to the question of his book's title—is that those who should rule in science are "the people."

How to accomplish that last objective? "They just need to hear more intelligent and informed voices." But which intelligent and informed voices should they hear? Should "the people" listen, say, to the liberal Union of Concerned Scientists, who recently lambasted the Bush administration for its supposed politicizing of scientific findings, or to Bush's Democratic science advisor John H. Marburger III, who rebutted their claims point by point? How do "the people" decide when experts differ, or when all experts have an interest in the outcome? Brown doesn't say.

We are indebted to James Robert Brown for a compelling defense of reason in science, and for an unintentional demonstration of the limited role that reason sometimes plays in politics.

AQUINAS
THE AUGUSTINIAN

February 3–5, 2005
Ave Maria University
Naples, Florida

Join us for this exciting conference!

John Rist, *Keynote Speaker*
Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Closing Speaker*

Also featuring:
Michel Barnes
Johannes Brachtendorff
Stephen F. Brown
Sarah Byers
Michael Dauphinais
Barry David
Robert Dodaro, OSA
Gilles Emery, OP
Harm Goris
Wayne Hankey
Reinhard Hütter
Mark Johnson
Matthew L. Lamb
Matthew Levering
Jody Vaccaro Lewis
Guy Mansini, OSB
Bruce Marshall
John O'Callaghan
Thomas Osborne
R. Trent Pomplun
Tracey Rowland
Michael Sherwin, OP
Jeremy Wilkins

Registration Fee for Conference Sessions **$100**

Students/Seminarians/Religious **$30**

Saturday Evening Banquet **$50**
(February 5)

For more information or to register:
Visit our website at
www.aquinas.avemaria.edu,
call (239) 280-2550, or email
matthew.levering@avemaria.edu.

Sponsored by

THE AQUINAS CENTER FOR THEOLOGICAL RENEWAL AND THE GRADUATE DEPARTMENT IN THEOLOGY AT AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY
1025 Commons Circle
Naples, Florida 34119

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BRIEFLY NOTED

IN DEFENSE OF GLOBALIZATION. By JAGDISH BHAGWATI. *Oxford University Press. 308 pp. $28.*

There are many books out there on economic globalization, but this is one to own and to keep on the shelf for frequent reference. It is solid, well organized, clearly written, and wickedly witty. As a younger man, Bhagwati was enamored of socialism, and in this book he sometimes quotes his old self to make a new point. His main reason for defending globalization is that he believes that it leads toward the goals that motivated him then and motivate him still: he wants to support a system that raises up the poor, succors the environment, and gives the fullest possible opportunity to all levels of society. Since he remembers the arguments that once fooled him, he can explain better than anyone I have read what works and why. Knowing India and Asia well, Bhagwati packs this book with examples taken from the poorest parts of the world. In 1970 11 percent of the world's poor were in Africa and 76 percent were in Asia; but by 1998 Africa had 66 percent of the world's poor and Asia only 15 percent. Bhagwati explains that Asia made such immense progress in reducing poverty through economic growth, growth promoted by those means that socialists hated and that anticapitalists still hate. After the fall of socialism in the break-up of the Soviet Union, where does today's anticapitalism come from? Bhagwati goes frequently to antiglobalization demonstrations and asks the young participants to talk about their reasons and arguments. He reports that most of these protesters are remarkably ignorant of economics, and that they come from English, comparative literature, and sociology courses in which they have imbibed, via Derrida and Foucault, the main principles of Marx and Lenin on capitalism, imperialism, and business. Bhagwati also discusses the ironic effect of a new technology, international TV news. For the inexperienced young, it reverses the usual pattern of sympathies, inducing greater empathy for distant individuals, shown dramatically as victims, than for one's own countrymen and kin, who are part of a great gray band of "oppressors." Children, women, culture, ecology, corporations, immigration, coping with downsides, managing transitions—Bhagwati has chapters on all of these and on many other issues that must be a part of any responsible defense of globalization. Bhagwati, author of many books and founder of the *Journal of International Economics*, is already internationally renowned. I hope that through this superbly argued book he will become familiar to many more Americans.

—*Michael Novak*

BREAKING THE DA VINCI CODE: ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS EVERYONE'S ASKING. By DARRELL L. BOCK. *Nelson Books. 208 pp. $19.99.*

Few works of popular literature in recent times have blurred the line between fiction and pseudo-historical propaganda more skillfully than Dan Brown's conspiracy-laden novel, *The Da Vinci Code*. Its phenomenal success in tale-weaving, combined with a not-too-subtle unorthodox message, has succeeded in raising doubts about the Christian tradition and story in the minds of

Ancient Roots and Modern Implications
2004 Pruit Memorial Symposium

Sept. 30-Oct. 2, 2004
Baylor University
Waco, Texas

Sponsored by the Institute for Faith and Learning

Keith R. Bradley, University of Notre Dame
Allen D. Callahan, Harvard Divinity School
Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Emory University
Eugene D. Genovese, Historical Society
Jennifer A. Glancy, Le Moyne College
Caleb Oladipo, Baptist Theological Seminary of Richmond

Visit www.baylor.edu/IFL for more details.

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

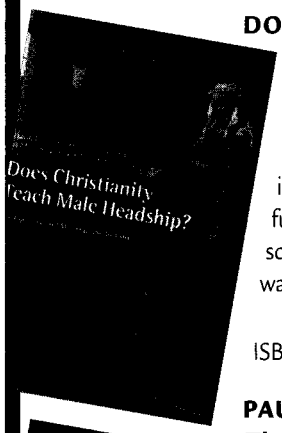
impressionable postmoderns, whether they are nonbelievers or simply Christians not well enough grounded in their history. The novel has also spawned a number of publications in response to its underlying thesis. Chief among them is this monograph by Darrell Bock, a research professor of New Testament studies at Dallas Theological Seminary. He deftly proceeds to crack the various "codes" embedded in Brown's book, including those concerning the identity of Mary Magdalene; the question of whether Jesus was married; how the canon of the New Testament, especially the four Gospels, came to be accepted; whether the "secret" Gnostic gospels aid our understanding of Jesus; and various other issues. Bock observes, "It is my view that novelists do not necessarily make good historians, and that matters when a topic like this one is portrayed in such an entertaining way as quasi-nonfiction. It is especially important when several ideas build into a huge theory—and each part of the construct is suspect." The result of Bock's labor is a competent refutation of the *The Da Vinci Code*'s erroneous assertions and a clear affirmation of Christian orthodoxy.

—Jeff McAlister

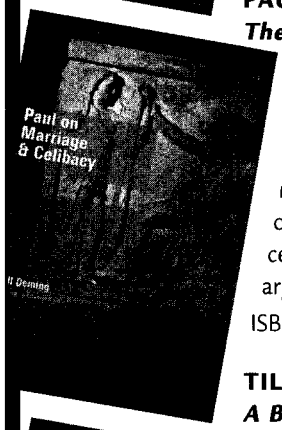
DRESDEN, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1945. By FREDERICK TAYLOR. *HarperCollins. 544 pp. $26.95.*

Proponents of the Western just war tradition are often asked if just war thinking has ever made a practical difference in the way Western nation-states fight wars. The answer is "yes," and nowhere is the difference more dramatic than in the tactical use of air power since World War II. The creation of new and more precise conventional airborne weapons (as opposed to nuclear weapons which are stockpiled largely for deterrence purposes rather than offensive use) can be seen as an effort to ensure that the destructive power of air war conforms to the moral principles of proportionality of means and noncombatant immunity. We've become used to hearing of "smart bombs" and this is an accurate description of a genuinely moral as well as technical advance. The moral turning point for the West was the conscience-wracking aftermath of the obliteration bombing done in Germany and Japan. Among these missions the fire-

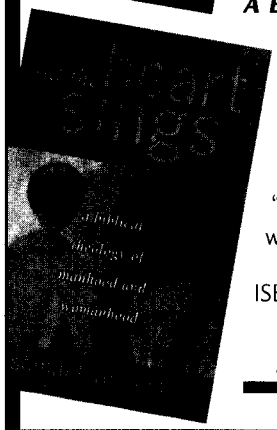
Recent Books *from* Eerdmans



DOES CHRISTIANITY TEACH MALE HEADSHIP?
The Equal-Regard Marriage and Its Critics
David Blankenhorn, Don Browning, and **Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen,** editors
"This book casts brilliant new light on the long-troubling issue of male headship in the family. If the book doesn't fully resolve the issue, it certainly presents a first-class scholarly debate and provides everything a reader would want to know in order to have a reasoned opinion."
– DAVID POPENOE
ISBN 0-8028-2171-5 · 157 pages · paperback · $15.00



PAUL ON MARRIAGE AND CELIBACY
The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7
SECOND EDITION
Will Deming
Foreword by **Raymond F. Collins**
"What a boon to have this landmark study available in a new, updated edition! This guarantees that the debate over the nature and meaning of Christian asceticism and celibacy will continue to benefit from Deming's meticulous arguments and sound conclusions." – JOUETTE BASSLER
ISBN 0-8028-3989-4 · 293 pages · paperback · $28.00



TILL THE HEART SINGS
A Biblical Theology of Manhood and Womanhood
Samuel Terrien
Foreword by **Phyllis Trible**
Sweeping yet selective in scope, this new edition of *Till the Heart Sings* makes available again Samuel Terrien's rich, acclaimed study of the biblical witness to personhood.
"One of those rare books that ought to be read by anyone who deals with Scripture or sexuality."
– *THEOLOGY TODAY*
ISBN 0-8028-2237-1 · 284 pages · paperback · $24.00

4019 WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49503

At your bookstore, or call 800-253-7521 · www.eerdmans.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bombing of Dresden stands out for its destructiveness—and has traditionally been considered the low point in willful and vengeful Allied brutality against innocent German civilians (and even, perhaps, like Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a show of strength to the Soviet Union)—with a death toll that some have set as high as a hundred thousand. Frederick Taylor's fresh look at the infamous attack is a reexamination of the received opinion that Dresden was a city of little military value and that the raid on it was thus a malicious attack. Dresden was, in fact, an industrial and rail center of some military importance, and many Dresden citizens produced armaments and military provisions, thus putting them into the category of legitimate military targets. Taylor recognizes that the mission represents the outer limits of moral permissibility even in the best of causes, and he does not so much justify the mission as, by comprehensive research and the clearing away of myth, seek to paint a picture of the mission that is not as black as we thought. Among other clarifications he makes, Taylor estimates the true number of deaths to be between 25,000 and 40,000—still a horrifying toll, considering that many citizens were not associated with military production and supply. Taylor has succeeded in his quest to give us a more accurate account of exactly what happened at Dresden and why. Not only does his book help us to grapple with this horror and clarify its genesis and meaning; it reminds us of why we should be thankful for the subsequent weapons designers who have done all they could to give us tactical options other than those used in the bombing of Dresden.

—Darrell Cole

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH: CULTURAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON A BIOMEDICAL GOAL. Edited by STEPHEN G. POST and ROBERT H. BINSTOCK. *Oxford University Press. 463 pp. $59.95.*

"Prolongevity" is a neologism that may be with us for a long time to come. It means "the significant extension of the length of human life, free from the diseases and disabilities now associated with old age," and there is substantial funding for and substantial interest in every sort of anti-aging and anti-dying project. This collection of eighteen well-written and thoughtfully annotated pieces expresses a range of perspectives—from principled enthusiasm to principled doubt—by practitioners of a variety of relevant disciplines. Among the eighteen contributors are Stephen Post and others whose names are probably well known to readers of FT, such as Carol Zaleski, Leon Kass, Neil Gillman, and Diogenes Allen, as well as other heavyweights in the field (Jay Olshansky, Michael R. Rose, Audrey Chapman, and Arthur Caplan, to name a few). The essays explore the history of the quest for stays against aging and death, and the medical, biological, philosophical, ethical, and social issues we must confront today. This is an informative primer on the state of a topic that will increasingly preoccupy our rapidly (but reluctantly?) aging population.

AGING, DEATH, AND THE QUEST FOR IMMORTALITY. Edited by C. BEN MITCHELL, ROBERT D. ORR, and SUSAN SALLADAY. *Eerdmans. 202 pp. $24.*

Like the Post and Binstock volume noted above, this collection (of thirteen articles) features physicians, ethicists, theologians, and educators, but its concerns are more practical than theoretical, with a focus on spiritual life, pastoral issues, dealing with senile dementia, and palliative care. The whole process of aging toward death has gained urgency as a topic of cultural discourse because many factors have coalesced to put us in the middle of a "longevity revolution," with "futurists" and "life

A Must Read series of books about sex addiction that contain principles that apply to all addictions.

"How To Stay Away From Lust One Day At a Time" is a compelling series of books that uses the first book of Moses, Genesis, in its focus on lust. The series transfuses a spiritual awakening to anyone whose life is affected by compulsive sexual behavior and is searching for ways to deal with it.

If you suffer from any addiction and believe in the power of prayer this new series can profoundly improve your life.

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER
ORDER VOLUME 1 FOR ONLY $9.95 + $3. S. & H.

800-380-3704

VOLUMES 1-4 $49.95 + $4.00 S & H

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

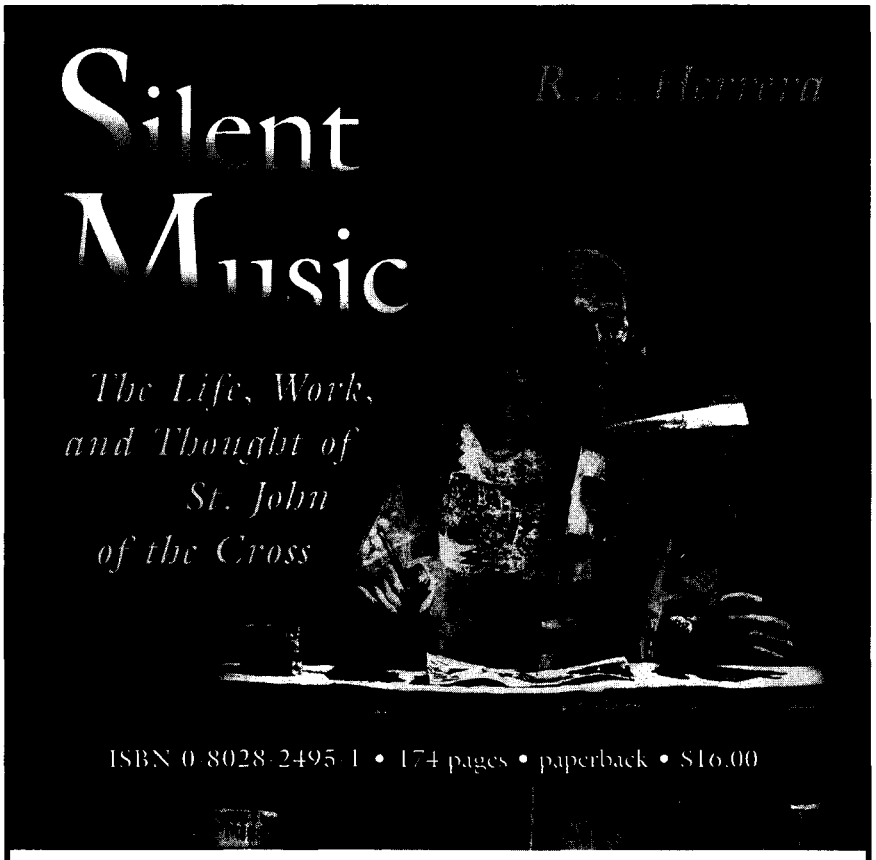
Use Your Credit Card or send your check or money order to:
Emmet L. Billroy Publishers, Dept. FT
Suite 300 PMB 741• 2711 Centerville Rd. Wilmington, DE 19808
Visit our web site at www.billroy.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

extension" mavens talking feverishly at times of halting aging and curing death. In the section on "The Quest for Immortality," C. Ben Mitchell notes that human beings already are, strictly speaking, immortal; and as for the prospect of very long lives—"An extended life of selfish narcissism would be hellish. The ultimate end of longevity must be the glory of the sovereign God." Stephen Post's contribution on "Dementia: Inclusive Moral Standing" expands on some of the themes touched on in an article he recently wrote for this journal (April). This volume will be an excellent resource for pastors and those in ministry to the elderly and families.

EXPLORING THE RELIGIOUS LIFE. By RODNEY STARK. *The Johns Hopkins University Press. 224 pp. $39.95.*

Baylor University has further strengthened its bid to exemplify a different kind of Christian university by recruiting Rodney Stark, whom some consider, not without reason, today's most provocative thinker in the sociology of religion. This book of essays is a sampler of Stark's sometimes contrarian but always suggestive explorations into "the religious life," which he argues from multiple demonstrations cannot be reduced to something else—whether social, moral, economic, or psychological. Here he debunks established ways of distinguishing religion from magic and science; shows that religious aspiration, far from being the sigh of the poor, is typically an undertaking of the well-to-do; examines why women tend to be more religious than men; challenges claims that "secularization" replaces religion; and argues against the tradition, stretching from Durkheim onward, which maintains that religion is to be understood as ritualized social projection rather than as ideas and truth claims that have their own distinctive force in both daily life and historical change. Throughout, Stark is sharply critical of sociological studies obsessed with statistics and survey research, arguing for a "theory-driven" approach that proposes interesting ideas and then puts them to the test of what we can know about the real world, including what can be known by statistical studies and survey research. The sociology of religion, along with sociology in general, has fallen upon hard times in recent decades. Rod-



Beginning with an erudite historical essay on the phenomenon of mysticism, *Silent Music* chronicles St. John's life story — from his humble birth in 1542, through his career as a professional religious, to his death in 1591 — placing the man and his spirituality squarely in their historical-cultural context. Herrera probes the saint's rigorous life of contemplation and his classic writings on such subjects as union with God and the "dark night of the soul," clarifying St. John's understanding of the mystical experience and paying particular attention to the notion of detachment and the recurring motifs of darkness, flame, and ascent in St. John's writings.

Appending his own original translations of select excerpts from St. John's poetry, Herrera here paints a richly detailed, multifaceted portrait of one of Christendom's most complex figures.

At your bookstore, or call 800-253-7521
www.eerdmans.com
4052
WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49503

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ney Stark gives his ailing discipline a needed injection of fresh ideas that could, just possibly, restore it to its former intellectual vitality.

THE ECUMENICAL FUTURE. Edited by CARL E. BRAATEN and ROBERT W. JENSON. *Eerdmans. 237 pp. $24 paper.*

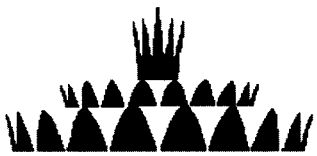
Last year a group of sixteen theologians from various Christian traditions published *In One Body Through the Cross*, which became known as the Princeton Proposal on the ecumenical future. The proposal received detailed and sympathetic consideration in these pages (see FT June/July 2003). The present book offers fourteen scholarly essays that served as resources for the drafting of the Princeton Proposal. It is a veritable *tour d'horizon* of current ecumenical thought among Orthodox, Catholic, and sundry Protestant thinkers who have broad and deep experience with the search for Christian unity. Like the Princeton Proposal, the book provides a grim picture of the institutional ecumenical movement that began in Edinburgh in 1910, was greatly boosted by the Second Vatican Council, and now seems to have hit a dead end. Not much is expected of the mainline/oldline communions that style themselves "ecumenical," and the authors can only hope that the vibrantly growing Evangelical and Pentecostal movements will turn their energies toward Christian unity, and that Orthodoxy with its theological and liturgical riches can overcome its own divisions and produce a dynamic of convergence for others. Those are somewhat wistful hopes. For the present and foreseeable future, all eyes are on the Roman Catholic Church with its irrevocable commitment to Christian unity. While the Catholic Church stays in conversation with everyone, she has not to date found a way to propose practicable steps toward full communion that do not arouse in others a fear of losing what they most value in their own traditions. As was said here of the Princeton Proposal, the conclusion is that we must continue to pray together, study together, talk together, and find ways of serving and evangelizing together, all the while awaiting an unpredictable and uncontrollable movement of the Spirit that will, or so we pray, show the way to full communion.

SALVATION IS FROM THE JEWS. By ROY H. SCHOEMAN. *Ignatius. 392 pp. $16.95 paper.*

Combining the scholarly and the personal, the author makes a very readable argument for Christianity as the fulfillment of Judaism, and for Jewish fulfillment as a Catholic Christian. While teaching at Harvard, Schoeman was mystically drawn to the Blessed Virgin and the sacraments and, after his conversion, became active with the growing community of those who call themselves Hebrew Catholics. The book provides an instructive introduction to a spiritual way unfamiliar to most Jews and most Christians alike.

EDUCATING FOR SHALOM. By NICHOLAS WOLTERSTORFF. *Eerdmans. 328 pp. $24 paper.*

The fruit of years of reflection on Christian higher education by a long-time professor of philosophical theology at Yale Divinity School should command the attention of everyone caught up in the puzzlement of how a religiously qualified university can be a real university. Confusions and conflicts over that



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY

A Benedictine Monastery of Catholic priests and brothers

Is the Lord calling you to join us

- in exploring the mystery of God in prayer;
- in living a common life;
- in the work of teaching or administration in an outstanding college preparatory school for boys, grades 7 through 12?

For more information, go to **www.stlouisabbey.org**

or contact: Father Ralph Wright, OSB • Saint Louis Abbey
500 South Mason Road • Saint Louis, MO 63141
Tel: 1-800-638-1527 or 1-314-434-5774
Email: frralph@priory.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

question wrack Catholics on all sides of the effort of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* to revive Catholic identity in higher education, as well as evangelical Protestants striving to escape what they view as the restrictions of confessional commitment. Of particular interest is Wolterstorff's argument that academic freedom cannot mean "free speech" in general but is defined by what the academy is for. The author, a Calvinist, ends with a warm appreciation of John Paul II's encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, expressing "awe and astonishment" that a "subtle philosophical discourse should be issued by the head of a vast ecclesiastical bureaucracy."

PUBLIC POLICY AND SOCIAL ISSUES: JEWISH SOURCES AND PERSPECTIVES. Edited by MARSHALL J. BREGER. *Praeger. 281 pp. $49.95.*

An excellent resource for understanding the Jewish position, or positions, on controverted social questions, including euthanasia, abortion, sexual ethics, family, welfare, and the market economy. Unfortunately, as some of the authors acknowledge, many Jews are indifferent to what is authentically Jewish, but for serious Jews and for public discourse in a society in which Judaism matters, it is useful to lay down the markers that identify a distinctive tradition, which is what this book succeeds in doing.

RELIGION AS A PUBLIC GOOD: JEWS AND OTHER AMERICANS ON RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE. Edited by ALAN MITTLEMAN. *Rowman & Littlefield. 336 pp. $29.95 paper.*

This is the third volume issued by Mittleman and colleagues under the auspices of a Pew-funded research project called Jews and the American Public Square. The first two titles published under this rubric (see FT March 2003) are *Jews and the American Public Square* and *Jewish Polity and American Civil Society*. The Jewish and non-Jewish contributors gathered here write seriously and well on the question (and for some of them it is a question, complete with question mark) of religion as a public good, and in what quantities and mixtures it may properly contribute to our common life. There is much here that is specific to Jewish experience and thought, but there is also much that applies to all religious believers who wish to understand themselves as full participants in American public life.

THE VIRTUE OF WAR: RECLAIMING THE CLASSIC CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS EAST AND WEST. By ALEXANDER F. C. WEBSTER and DARRELL COLE. *Regina Orthodox Press. 252 pp. $19.95 paper.*

The distinctive contribution of this book is in the plural "traditions" of its subtitle. Augustine and Aquinas are here, of course, as are Calvin and Niebuhr in the Protestant tradition. But with scholarly care and energetic argument, the authors draw also on Byzantine fathers, icons, and the lives of the saints in making the case that going to war and conduct in war can be virtuous. In doing so, they counter the claim that just war is "a necessary evil" rather than a positive duty in the service of securing peace. The book is a noteworthy exercise in ecumenical moral theology and also a challenge to Christians who too easily assume that simply opposing war is the way to peace.

AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY
Coordinator of Prospect Research

Reporting to the Vice President of University Relations, the Coordinator of Prospect Research is a member of the Vice President's advisory group and consults with and advises the President, Vice Presidents, Deans and Directors on issues relating to external fundraising. The Coordinator is expected to support college faculty in their pursuit of external funding for scholarly activities, supervise students and research interns, review and approve applications for external funding and assist in preparing statistical reports, grants, and annual reports.

Job responsibilities include:

- Identifying prospective individual, corporation and foundation donors.
- Developing prospective and active donor files (hard copies as well as Raiser's Edge specific).
- Updating development policies and procedures.
- Monitoring gift activities and patterns to support prospect development.
- Providing the Vice President for University Relations and development staff with critical fundraising data.
- Processing and coordinating major grants for the university.

Qualifications include:

- Bachelor's degree; master's preferred.
- Knowledge of key prospecting resources.
- PC Proficiency in MS Office, Raisers Edge, Excel, ABT, and website software.
- Strong interpersonal and team-building skills.
- Excellent writing and editing skills.
- Relocation to the Naples area.
- Commitment to the mission and values of Ave Maria University and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Review of applications will begin July 31st and will continue until position is filled. For full consideration, please send a cover letter, resume and the names and contact information of three professional references to Carole Carpenter, Ave Maria University, 1025 Commons Circle, Naples Florida, 34119. Fax 239-352-2392 or email ccarpenter@avemaria.edu. No phone calls please. Use only one method of application.

THE GODLY COMPETITION
Creative writing for public worship and prayers for small groups.

Is composing Prayers, Collects, Litanies, and Hymns in classic English that are faithful to Holy Scripture something you can, or desire, to do for adults and/or young people? If so, enter "The Godly Competition" sponsored by The Prayer Book Society of the U.S.A.

For full details, write to:
The P.B.S.
P.O. Box 35220
Philadelphia, PA 19128-0220
or visit www.episcopalian.org/pbs1928

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion, Culture, and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

COMMUNION & *COMMUNIO*

Forty-four years is a long time and a lot has changed since the last Catholic ran for president. Early in his campaign, John Kerry opined that the question of a Catholic politician's adherence to church teaching had been settled by John F. Kennedy in 1960. As has become more evident in succeeding months, Senator Kerry's education in Catholic teaching and practice is gravely deficient. He is not entirely to blame for that. Last year, when pressed by a reporter on how he could square his unqualified support for the unlimited abortion license with his being a Catholic, Kerry finally gave the testy response, "It's the bishops' problem, not mine" (see FT October 2003). That made a kind of sense. Bishops say, rightly, that they have a responsibility for the spiritual welfare, even the salvation, of those in their care. John Kerry and a host of other politicians—mainly but not exclusively Democratic—respond by saying, in effect, "How come now you are suddenly so concerned about my soul? For years and years I took the positions I take now and was considered, as I considered myself, a Catholic in good standing. Now all of a sudden bishops are saying I should refrain from or even be refused Communion." Some politicians who say that are, I expect, feigning surprise and indignation; others are genuinely confused.

When in 1960 JFK assured the Baptist ministers of Houston that his Catholicism would have no bearing on his public conduct, bishops and other leaders in the Church privately winced but most held their tongues. So eager were Catholics to have one of their own in the White House. Since then it has become sadly evident that JFK did not let his Catholicism have much bearing on his private conduct either, and the magisterial authority of the Houston settlement of "the Catholic question" has been greatly diminished. In 1960 the Catholic question entailed few policy specifics. Aid to parochial schools and a U.S. ambassador to the Vatican were minor disputes compared with what was to come. What was to come was, above all, the 1973 Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*. Now again it is being confirmed that *Roe* is the most important event in our political culture of the last half century. That should not surprise. Church teaching, divine law, natural justice, clear reason, and partisan politics converge in the claim that it is intrinsically evil, it is always and everywhere wrong, to deliberately take an innocent human life.

A growing number of bishops are now accused of meddling in politics. Once again, old canards are circulating about whether Catholicism is compatible with American democracy. Some Democrats express the belief that all this will work to the benefit of Kerry and other pro-abortion politicians, permitting them to depict themselves as courageously resisting ecclesiastical authority. That is possible. After the two-year media storm over sex-abuse scandals, Catholic bishops are typecast, and not as heroes. Moreover, bishops who attempt to impose a measure of discipline are regularly asked if, their denials to the contrary notwithstanding, they are not being partisan since the discipline falls mainly on Democrats. They can correctly respond that the Democratic leadership is responsible for that party being locked into an extremist don't-give-an-inch commitment to the unlimited abortion

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

license. The truth is that most bishops, like most Catholics, are by disposition and history Democrats. Not so long ago, the old saw was true that Irish Catholics—and not only Irish—received, along with their baptismal certificate, a union card and enrollment in the Democratic Party. That, too, was changed by *Roe* and its sequelae. Today, the official position and actual leadership of the Republican Party is in agreement with Catholic teaching on the moral imperative to protect unborn children. The Democratic Party, by way of sharpest contrast, permits, at least at the national level, not one hint, not one iota, of dissent from the lethal logic of *Roe*.

It did not have to be this way. It is deeply troubling when, in our kind of democracy, the two major parties are so starkly polarized on the great moral question of human dignity and human rights. The last time that happened was in the mid-nineteenth century over the question of slavery, which is not a happy precedent. It is more than arguable that, if the bishops had done their duty, as many of them are now doing their duty, back in the 1960s when "liberalized abortion law" was being agitated, we would not be in our present situation. If the bishops and other Catholic leaders had then made clear in no uncertain terms that the Democratic Party's dalliance with abortion on demand would precipitate a direct confrontation with the Church and the potential alienation of millions of Catholic voters, it seems likely that Democratic leaders would not have permitted the party's capture by radical pro-abortionists. As improbable as it seems now, in the 1960s the Democratic Party was much more anti-abortion than the Republican. But many of the traditional party leaders were pushed aside by the 1972 "McGovern revolution," which assigned the party's future to its extremist factions. Nonetheless, I think it probable that the bishops could have made a difference if back then they had spoken as some of them are now, at long last, speaking.

"Democrats Expel Catholics"

I remember long and melancholic conversations with the late Msgr. George Higgins, the last of the great "labor priests." He was the Catholic chaplain, so to speak, to the AFL-CIO during the years of George Meany and Lane Kirkland. Higgins, who died in May 2002 at the age of eighty-six, spoke in tones of gratification laced with bitterness about his years of struggle to prevent the AFL-CIO from unqualifiedly endorsing *Roe*. With the succession of John Sweeney, another Catholic, that battle, too, was lost. George Higgins didn't have to wait for baptism; he was genetically a Democrat. I pressed him on whether organized labor, with its huge Catholic membership, could not be moved into the pro-life column. Not a chance, he said. There was the McGovern factor, and the teachers unions, especially in New York. Moreover, the bishops would not risk a direct confrontation with labor and the Democratic Party. The best that could be done, he said, was a holding action that prevented organized labor from enlisting unqualifiedly on the other side. He lived long enough to see the collapse even of the holding action. George Higgins and I disagreed, for the most part amiably, about many things, and such was his devotion to the Democratic Party and organized labor that I am not at all sure whether, if it came to it, he would have supported such a confrontation with the Church. But he was poignantly aware that things could have turned out differently.

We are inclined to forget the state of the abortion question before *Roe v. Wade*. Joseph Califano, in his just-published memoir *Inside: A Private and Public Life* (Public Affairs, 512 pp., $30) recalls the madness of the Miami Democratic convention of 1972. I was a New York delegate and well remember how the party's radicals pressed for a resolution supporting legalized abortion. The move was turned back at the last moment by leaders, including McGovern, who knew that voters were overwhelmingly opposed to such a position. Even McGovern wasn't prepared to be *that* radical. Only a few months later, in an act of "raw judicial power" (Justice Byron White), the Supreme Court wiped off the books of all fifty states every law protecting unborn children. It is not true, as Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and others have claimed, that *Roe* only hurried along what was already happening in the country. As was evident in elections and referenda in several states, public sentiment was moving against legalizing abortion. One can only speculate about what might have happened if bishops, in the immediate aftermath of the Court decision, had addressed Catholic Democrats in the forceful way that some are now doing. Some were vocal back then. A few years after *Roe*, when Senator Ted Kennedy and others led the party to an unqualified endorsement of the decision, the St. Louis archdiocesan paper carried the headline "Democrats Expel Catholics." (Today's archbishop of St. Louis, Raymond Burke, was among the first out of the gate in the current round of holding Catholic politicians accountable.)

Califano writes about Miami: "As I watched and listened, the convention was moving the Democratic Party from the harbor of economic issues like full employment and health care for all into the turbulent seas of cultural revolution likely to infuriate and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

alienate many middle-class Americans who had been the backbone of the party from Roosevelt through Johnson. How will they react, I wondered as I stood on the podium, to the effort of many delegates to establish cultural issues like abortion rights and gay liberation as litmus tests for what constitutes a national Democrat?" Such is the history to keep in mind when current critics of episcopal censures complain that they are weighted against Democrats. Had bishops been more assertive earlier, it might have prevented what Califano and others saw happening to the future of the Democratic Party. But again, it must be acknowledged that the leaders of the party with whom the bishops might be expected to have greatest influence were being rapidly displaced by the McGovern revolution.

Bishops, like most people, are often dilatory and strongly disposed toward avoiding controversy. The Catholic sensibility, as has often been noted, is not that of a dialectical either/or but of an analogical both/and. A bishop's job rating is determined, in very large part, by his success in keeping everybody on board. This is called "the ministry of unity," and there is a great deal to be said for it. But now episcopal hands are forced by a presidential candidate who says he is Catholic and who publicly, persistently, and defiantly rejects the Church's teaching on the greatest moral-political question of our time. The stakes are high for the polity of the nation, but much higher for the polity of the Church. The latter is the polity that must be of preeminent concern to the bishops. Over the last several decades, and especially after the last two years of scandal, their credibility and authority have been severely battered. Wounded though they are, some bishops, maybe most bishops, know that they cannot be perceived as defaulting once again—as many did with respect to sex abuse—on their solemnly sworn duty.

No Moral Equivalence

In the present and admittedly messy circumstance, it might be suggested that their solemnly sworn duty involves, first of all, the spiritual welfare of those in their care. This entails the clear and uncompromised teaching of the faith, and correcting those who misrepresent that teaching. They have no choice but to address the public scandal and confusion created by prominent Catholics who publicly and persistently reject the Church's teaching without apparent consequence. A bishop's duties are internal to the life of the Church, although they obviously have external effects, including in electoral politics. Understandable concern about external effects must give way, however, to a bishop's awareness of his responsibility *qua* bishop. He is the shepherd, the pastor, the teacher, of the community entrusted to his care. The presidential and congressional elections of this year are important, to be sure, but not nearly so important as the testing of the Church's integrity in not compromising the moral truth with which she is entrusted or her responsibility for the souls committed to her care.

Different bishops are responding to the test in different ways. It is, as of this writing, uncertain whether the committee of the bishops conference charged with coming up with a proposal for a uniform response will report before the elections, and it is not unlikely that any such proposal would encounter serious disagreements among the bishops. In any event, bishops have to act now. The worry is expressed that different responses will give the impression that the bishops are not united. I am not so sure. Each bishop is the appointed teacher in his local Church, the diocese. The truth about questions of great importance has not always been well served by the assumption that the bishops must speak "as a body" through the conference. If there is agreement on what the Church teaches about the intrinsic evil of taking innocent human life in abortion, embryonic research, and euthanasia, the pastoral application of that teaching, relying on the grace of office and prudential judgment of bishops, may vary from place to place.

What is truly troubling is that some bishops are fudging the Church's teaching by suggesting, for instance, that there is a moral equivalence between abortion, capital punishment, the war in Iraq, and a host of other disputed questions. That is false, as anybody knows who has read with care the 1995 encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, the November 2002 doctrinal note from Rome on participation in political life, or the U.S. bishops' own statement "Living the Gospel of Life," issued in 1998. A few bishops have said that they would not use the Eucharist as an instrument for pressing politicians who publicly and persistently reject the Church's teaching. Other bishops correctly point out that, from the beginning of the Church, immoral actions have had consequences for communion. Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver, for instance, quotes the words of Justin Martyr from the second century: "No one may share the Eucharist with us unless he believes that what we teach is true . . . and unless he lives in accordance with the principles given us by Christ." Chaput also quotes St. Paul who "reminds the people who are not living their lives according to the gospel of Jesus Christ and yet receive the Eucharist that they bring judgment on themselves." Guarding the Eucharist from profanation, and souls from incurring divine judgment, is a responsibility that goes back to Christian beginnings.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There is also Canon 915 in the Code of Canon Law: "Those upon whom the penalty of excommunication or interdict has been imposed or declared, and others who obstinately persist in manifest grave sin, are not to be admitted to Holy Communion." Canon lawyers agree that the "those" in the first part of that canon would seem to be limited to cases where there has been some kind of judicial process and public declaration. On the other hand, hundreds, if not thousands, of politicians, both Democratic and Republican, and at all levels of government, would seem to qualify as "others who obstinately persist in manifest grave sin." It is a grave sin to knowingly, publicly, and persistently reject and encourage others to reject the moral law that it is intrinsically evil, always and everywhere wrong, to deliberately take innocent human life. This, bishops must more effectively communicate, is not a "sectarian" Catholic teaching but a moral law obliging all. To say that an unborn child is not entitled to legal protection is comparable to saying that poor people or black people are not entitled to legal protection. It is worth noting that many who are now so harshly critical of the Church cheered when, in the civil rights era, the archbishop of New Orleans excommunicated supporters of racial segregation.

"Whose Side Are You On?"

The situation of John Kerry—to take but the most obvious example—is significantly different from that of Mario Cuomo who, when governor of New York, made a speech at Notre Dame explaining why, although he did not reject the moral truth about abortion, he could not impose his convictions in the absence of a moral consensus supporting the protection of the unborn. His argument was made vacuous by the fact that he did nothing to build such a consensus—as he did, against great opposition, in opposing capital punishment—and the fact that he assiduously solicited and benefited from the support of pro-abortionists. Kerry, who has a 100 percent approval rating from pro-abortion organizations, also on partial-birth abortion, has repeatedly and publicly taken his unequivocal stand with NARAL Pro-Choice America, Planned Parenthood, and other groups that have stridently declared for decades that they view the Catholic Church as their number-one enemy. The question for Kerry and others similarly situated is inescapable: Whose side are you on?

Receiving Communion has everything to do with *communio*. It is not simply a matter of participating in a religious ritual but of declaring oneself in solidarity with Christ and his Church, as Catholics believe Christ constituted his Church. It is not a matter of having a problem with one or another of the Church's teachings. Many thoughtful Catholics do, and pray for the grace of a more perfect *communio*. To paraphrase Newman, a thousand problems do not add up to a rejection. A bishop cannot with integrity pretend not to notice public and persistent rejection, or pretend that it has no consequences for a person's communion with the Church. A person may believe he is acting in good conscience, and the Church teaches that even a wrongly formed conscience must be obeyed, but public rejection requires public response. Some bishops have said that offending public figures should be refused Communion, others that they should refrain from communing, until the rejection that impairs their *communio* has been remedied. Priests on the spot, unless under direct orders from their bishop, are rightly reluctant to deny anyone communion, since they cannot know for sure the state of the person's inward disposition.

One bishop has said that not only pro-abortion politicians but also anyone who votes for a pro-abortion politician should refrain from communion. This is highly problematic. It would seem to ignore the distinction between an act and the intention behind the act—what in traditional language is called the difference between material and formal cooperation in a wrong. It is not hard to imagine a circumstance in which an unquestionably pro-life voter might vote for a pro-abortion politician *despite* that politician's being pro-abortion. In fact, one does not have to imagine. Just this spring, pro-lifers President Bush and Senator Rick Santorum successfully urged support in the Pennsylvania primary for the pro-abortion Senator Arlen Specter in order to maintain control of the Senate and the possibility of advancing pro-life legislation. It would be an obtuse indifference to political and moral realities to suggest that Catholics who voted for Specter with that intention in mind impaired their *communio* with the Church.

Forty-four years after JFK at Houston, Catholicism in America is confronted by a historic moment of truth. The question is, as John Paul II has repeatedly stressed, whether, in contending for the culture of life, the Church will have the courage to be a sign of contradiction or will retreat into being a sign of conformity. The analogical sensibility of both/and is sometimes in necessary tension with the dialectical either/or. The Church as James Joyce's "Here Comes Everybody" depends upon there being a here here. If *communio* is not defined, it cannot attract and will not be defended. In view of the negligence of so many bishops in the past, one can understand John Kerry's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

response of last year, "It's the bishops' problem, not mine." No longer. It is the bishops' problem, to be sure, but their problem is to make clear, as they did not make clear in the past, that it is also John Kerry's problem, and the problem of numerous other public figures who wrongly thought, perhaps because they were wrongly taught, that Communion can be detached from *communio*.

* * *

Afterword: At their Denver meeting in June, the bishops did adopt, with only six dissenting votes, a succinct statement, "Catholics in Political Life." Noting that abortion is "always intrinsically evil and can never be justified," the bishops state that those who knowingly, freely, and consistently support abortion on demand are "guilty of grave sin and separate themselves from God's grace." The examination of conscience required before receiving Communion "includes fidelity to the moral teaching of the Church in personal and public life." In relating to Catholics in political life, the bishops commit themselves to teach, counsel, and persuade. The decision to refuse Communion in certain cases rests with individual bishops who may "legitimately make different judgments on the most prudent course of pastoral action." In the intense deliberation, Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver and Francis Cardinal George of Chicago were among those who, supported by a written intervention from Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, provided distinguished leadership in turning back minority proposals to delay a statement by consigning the task to the bureaucratic processes of the bishops conference. Following the vote, Roger Cardinal Mahony issued a statement reiterating his position that pro-abortion politicians are welcome to receive Communion in Los Angeles. Theodore Cardinal McCarrick of Washington offered a distinctive interpretation of the statement, saying that the message is that the battle over abortion "should be fought not at the communion rail but in the public square." But, of course, the whole point of the statement is to address the necessary connection between Communion and *communio*. Some observers deplore the outcome of the Denver meeting as a splintering of episcopal unity; others view it as a welcome, if belated, sign that bishops are prepared to assume leadership as teachers and pastors in their local churches. Many bishops, we are told, welcomed the more free and open deliberation at Denver, which was in sharp contrast to meetings in which bishops are closely tutored in processing the preprogrammed positions of the USCCB leadership and staff.

FT

HOW ARE WE DOING?

"How is FIRST THINGS doing?" The question is regularly asked wherever I go, and I am glad to answer that, all in all, we're doing reasonably well. Of course, I think not only of the journal but of the various activities of the Institute on Religion and Public Life that surround, support, and inform what appears in these pages. This is written at the end of a week of back-to-back meetings. First the annual gathering of the editorial boards, then a day with Francis Cardinal Arinze and forty-five Christian and Jewish theologians in our Dulles Colloquium (named of course, for Avery Cardinal Dulles), and, finally, another working session of Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT).

A Nigerian, Cardinal Arinze is head of the Vatican's congregation for worship, and he formerly led the pontifical council for relations with world religions. It was a day of scintillating exchanges, ranging from Christian unity to liturgical reform, and with a particular concentration on the future of Christian-Muslim relations. Cardinal Arinze is a thoughtful, personable, devout, and utterly persuasive man, and I expect that everyone there was thinking that when the time comes, as it inevitably will come, for a new pope, it would be a great thing for the Church and the world were the choice to fall on Francis Cardinal Arinze. Of course none of us has a vote, which is probably just as well.

ECT continues its work on a new statement with the working title "The Universal Call to Holiness." It is not easy; not only because of differences between Catholics and Evangelicals but also because of differences among Evangelical and Pentecostal traditions on questions such as baptism, election, perfectionism, and other matters entangled in generations of controversy. But we are confident that, as we have been able to produce statements of uncompromising honesty on long-aggravated questions such as justification and scriptural authority, we will be led to success on this one as well. The pioneers of this project—Cardinal Dulles, Chuck Colson, J. I. Packer, and your writer—know that we may not be around for many more years, and so we are pleased that a number of younger scholars have joined us, assuring, we hope, the future of ECT's mission for generations to come.

While FIRST THINGS involves many things, when people ask how FIRST THINGS is doing, they are usually referring to the journal and, more specifically, to circulation. While modest outside funding can be obtained for other projects, FT struggles to pull its

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

own weight. But the news is good. By the end of this year, it appears we will have an average monthly circulation of over 31,000. One might think that very small in a country of almost three hundred million people, but it has always been a relative handful of people who are serious readers. When it comes to circulation, we never quite know to what FT should be compared. There are the more political magazines, such as the *Nation*, which has surged this year to 160,000, no doubt reflecting anti-Bush sentiment on the left. *National Review* is fairly close behind with 127,000, while the *Weekly Standard* and the *New Republic*, both very influential within the beltway, are somewhat over 40,000, which represents a big drop for the latter. In terms of intellectual challenge and breadth of interest, FT is in some ways more similar to the *New York Review of Books* and *Commentary*. The former remains fairly steady at 82,000, while the latter is down to a little under 18,000.

Among somewhat comparable religious publications, we're well behind *America*, the Jesuit weekly, which has a circulation of 45,000, and a thousand or two behind *Christian Century*, the voice of oldline liberal Protestantism. The first was founded in 1909 and the second in 1884, so they have a century's lead over FT, especially in institutional subscriptions. They got into thousands of libraries many years ago, and libraries tend to be reliable renewals. Our subscribers are almost all individuals, which makes this a good occasion to again urge readers, and academics in particular, to get libraries to subscribe. After FT, and in order from 28,000 to 11,000, are *Crisis*, *Commonweal*, *Catholic World Report*, *New Oxford Review*, and the fine Evangelical literary-intellectual publication, *Books & Culture*.

Readers of FIRST THINGS (ROFTERS) are extraordinarily loyal. The rate of "first renewals" is over 80 percent and the "renewals of renewals" over 95 percent. Veterans in the publishing industry tell me the latter figure is astonishing, perhaps unprecedented. It almost defies the mortality rate, which holds steady at 100 percent. Of all the current circulation data, the long-term renewal rates are the most important and the most gratifying. I am frequently asked whether FT is self-supporting, and the answer is in the negative. Ours is a very lean operation and we rely on more than a little help from our friends. In that connection, the annual appeal, sent out shortly before Christmas, is critically important. Last year, the response to the appeal was the largest ever, and we're hoping to do better this year. It is still a relatively small percentage of readers who respond to the appeal. If you have responded in the past, please think about increasing your contribution. If you haven't, please do so this year.

So how are we doing? Reasonably well, thank you. And I do mean thank *you*. At the editorial board meeting this year, we went back to look at the statement of purpose in the premier issue of March 1990, and asked ourselves whether it still represents what we have been doing, are doing, and intend to do in the future. We concluded that, while we might fiddle with a phrase or two, the answer is definitely in the affirmative. (You might want to check out that editorial statement, "Putting First Things First," on the website, *www.firstthings.com*) After stating our goals in some detail, we acknowledged the difficulty in fulfilling them and invoked a familiar story. Once in Chelm, the mystical village of East European Jews, a man was appointed to stand at the village gate watching out for the coming of the Messiah. After some time, he complained to the village elders that his pay was too low. "You are right," they said. "The pay is low. But consider: the work is steady."

FT

KEEPING ROGUE SCIENCE ROGUE

There has been a lot of tongue-biting by pro-lifers in connection with the most recent report of the President's Council on Bioethics, *Reproduction & Responsibility: The Regulation of New Biotechnologies*. The report is formally unanimous, but a flurry of "personal statements" appended to it reveal the very sharp differences between members of the Council. Indeed, the differences are so very sharp, and members offer such conflicting interpretations of the report, that one has to wonder about the claim that it reflects a consensus.

Some pro-life leaders have publicly criticized the report, but most are holding their fire, in large part out of respect for Council members who signed it, such as Robert P. George, Mary Ann Glendon, Alfonso Gómez-Lobo, William Hurlbut, Gilbert Meilaender, and the chairman, Leon Kass. As is the way with statements aiming at consensus, ambiguities abound, allowing for contradictory interpretations. The techno-optimists, led by James Q. Wilson, suggest the report opens the way to the more expansive use of human embryos in stem cell and related research. William Cardinal Keeler, chairman of the Catholic bishops' pro-life committee, protests that the report does precisely that. The Council recommends banning research on embryos older than ten to fourteen days. According to the Keeler statement, "The decisive fact is that human life is a continuum from the one-celled stage

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

onward. Any cutoff point after this event is arbitrary—providing no *principled* reason not to extend the time limit for destructive research, once the precedent is established. We should not start down this road, but explore ways to discourage research that attacks any human life."

In principle, the pro-life signers of the statement do not disagree with that. They point out, however, that proposals to ban all embryo research are, at present and in the foreseeable future, politically blocked. Moreover, they note, researchers have already started "down this road." The Council's recommendations would limit and regulate what is now unlimited and unregulated. It is important to note that—despite the spin put on it by some Council members—this report does not fudge or retract earlier positions taken by the Council; for instance a permanent ban on cloning to produce children and a four-year moratorium on cloning for embryo research. The Council also calls for a ban on, inter alia, producing embryos with human sperm and animal eggs, and vice versa; implanting human embryos into animals; buying, selling, or patenting human embryos; and conceiving a child whose father or mother is a dead embryo or aborted fetus.

Such things sound bizarre, and they are, but they are being done or are on the edge of being done. There are rogue technicians, driven by hubris and greed, who are willing to produce babies-to-order by any means. The Council's purpose, in part, is to make sure they continue to be rogues, to prevent them from turning their activities into a lucrative industry. In a joint statement in the appendix, George and Gómez-Lobo write, "We are among the members of the Council who favor protecting human life from the very beginning by banning the use of living human embryos at any stage of development as disposable research material. Until this becomes politically feasible, we support efforts to accord as much protection as possible by limiting the number of days beyond which the law tolerates deliberate embryo killing. It is important to understand that the Council's recommendation here is *not* to authorize embryo-destructive research up to a certain limit. It is only to prohibit such research beyond a certain limit."

Is this a morally permissible—although eminently debatable—prudential judgment or is it cooperation in a great evil? I am inclined to believe it is the former, while having grave reservations about the wisdom of participating in a consensus statement representing a consensus so very thin and so very subject to dishonest manipulation. Keep in mind that the policy declared by President Bush in August 2001 covered only government-funded research. Under other auspices, the exploitation of embryos in stem cell and related research is unregulated, and Harvard and other institutions are devoting huge resources to establish their morally odious leadership in this area. The Council's recommendations would not make lawful anything that is now unlawful, and they would make unlawful much that is now lawful. Once now-unregulated research is firmly established in practice, it is argued, it would be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to regulate it after the fact.

Reproduction & Responsibility contains other complicated proposals that require finely honed moral discernment and prudential judgments. But on the question of setting a ten- to fourteen-day limit on using embryos for research, a rough analogy suggests itself. If you negotiate with terrorists who you have every reason to believe will kill ten hostages, and you get them to agree to kill only three and let the others go, what is the accurate moral description of what you have done? Have you condoned the killing of the three, or have you succeeded in saving the seven? Such are the hard questions posed by our brave new world. An alternative, of course, is not to negotiate with terrorists. Are you then complicit in the killing of all ten? There are circumstances in which one can do nothing about a great evil except bear witness against it. Some of the Council members mentioned above are, I believe, acting in a way consonant with the teaching of *Evangelium Vitae* in trying to limit a great evil while working toward eliminating it. I have enormous respect for their moral wisdom and integrity. I hope they have done the right thing in signing on to *Reproduction & Responsibility*.

FT

ANTI-SEMITISM AND FALSE ALARMS

Although repercussions may extend far into the future, we can now get a measure of critical distance from the extraordinary religious and cultural moment that is Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* and the responses to it. One welcomes, therefore, the reflection of David Berger of Brooklyn College, writing in *Commentary*, "Jews, Christians, and 'The Passion.'" Berger gets off on the right foot by noting, as have many others, that people generally take from the film what they bring to it. "Despite its powerful cinematic effects, this is a film whose capacity to move depends in large measure on the viewer's ability to identify with Jesus of Nazareth for reasons that are not presented in the film

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

itself. If you come with love and admiration for its hero, and all the more so if you come with faith in his divinity and his supreme self-sacrifice, every lash, every nail, every drop of blood will tear at your psyche." Berger, as a Jew, did not bring such beliefs to the film and therefore left it "curiously unmoved."

He is moved, however, to deplore Christian literalists who defend the film as being faithful to history and the gospel texts, as well as Orthodox Jews who defend such literalism and the film more generally. Christians who took high school classes to see the film with all its brutality are guilty of what is "perhaps, indeed, a form of child abuse." Berger does not say outright that the film is anti-Semitic but observes, "No filmmaker who actually cared about avoiding anti-Semitism could have produced anything resembling it." He does not believe that the film "was made with the conscious purpose of fomenting hatred against Jews." He is exercised that the film does not abide by guidelines issued by the Catholic bishops conference for presenting the passion, although he knows full well that the bishops did not sponsor and had no control over the film. Berger expresses sympathy for the judgment of another Jewish critic who said, "The solid bridge of trust Jews thought they had with the Catholic Church now lies exposed as merely a drawbridge, readily placed in raised position when it is most needed."

Perhaps Berger fails to appreciate that Catholics viewed the film in order to witness and enter into the suffering and death of their Lord, not to check out its conformity to episcopal statements on Jewish-Christian relations. It seems more than likely that, in viewing the film, even those with a long-standing commitment to Jewish-Christian dialogue had Jesus, not Jews, on their mind and, despite the film's nonobservance of dialogical protocols, were deeply moved. In his judicious conclusion, Berger writes, "If amity is to prevail, traditionalist Christians will have to force themselves to understand that reasonable people have grounds for genuine concern about this movie, that its critics do not necessarily hate them, and that some like them very much indeed." He also urges Jews to be patient with evangelical Protestants, whose political support is so crucial to the safety and well-being of the State of Israel.

It is true that critics of the film do not, as Berger says, necessarily hate Christianity and Christians. It is also true that many of them apparently do. Among the critics in the major newspapers and magazines who wrote from a specifically Jewish perspective, the film was repeatedly and venomously attacked as pornographic, as an exercise in sado-masochism, and, in several instances, as a "sacred snuff film." Leon Wieseltier of the *New Republic* used the film as an occasion to repeat what can only be described as his standard rant against the grotesque absurdity of Christianity and the fools who believe it. The Anti-Defamation League gave us to understand that American Christians are latent anti-Semites who are only waiting for an excuse, which *The Passion* provides, to go out and kill Jews. The amity for which David Berger and all of us must hope will likely survive the shock to Christians in learning that many Jews have nothing but fear and loathing for their religion and, by extension, for them. At the same time, the relish with which prominent Jews indulged the teaching of contempt for Christianity and Christians bears witness to the Jewish sense of security in this overwhelmingly Christian society. Hysterical allegations to the contrary, such Jews obviously do not believe that Christians want to do them harm. And they are, thank God, right about that.

One long-term consequence of attacks on *The Passion* will be, almost certainly, a general discounting of the charge of anti-Semitism. The next time the ADL and others raise the alarm about anti-Semitism, the response of most Christians and many Jews is likely to be dismissive. "Ah yes, that's what they said about *The Passion*, isn't it?" Animus will have to rise to the undeniably explicit level of swastikas painted on synagogues for most Americans to acknowledge that, yes, on the far margins of society there is still such a thing as anti-Semitism. The debasing of concern about anti-Semitism is a pity. As we see in Europe today, anti-Judaism, frequently in the form of modern anti-Semitism, still poses a threat to which we must be alert. Unfortunately, and largely as a result of Jewish reactions to *The Passion*, most Americans will be inclined to believe that every alarm about anti-Semitism is a false alarm.

FT

TO BE AMERICAN

It hardly seems like all of eight years ago that Samuel P. Huntington gave us *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. September 11, 2001, gave that prescient book a sense of immediacy that is not likely to wane for a long time to come. The book introduced most readers to worlds of culture, religion, and politics to which they had not previously given much thought. Huntington's new book, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (Simon & Schuster, 320 pp., $27), may be just as prescient—it is certainly just as bold—but it will be an easier target for critics.

That is because most of its likely readers think they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have thought about the challenges he addresses, and they hold positions on these questions that fit into familiar partisan disputes. It seems the lines are pretty well drawn on, for instance, immigration policy, affirmative action, multiculturalism, and economic and cultural globalization. Many who have made up their minds and do not want to think again will blithely or angrily deride the book as an exercise in anti-immigrant, nativist, and chauvinist reaction. Those inclined to ad hominem attacks will not be able to resist the cheap pleasure of depicting Huntington, whose ancestors came over in the early seventeenth century, as a nostalgic advocate of restoring an American WASP hegemony that is irretrievably, and happily, a thing of the past.

The thoughtful reader should not be taken in by such utterly predictable attacks. *Who Are We?* explores old questions in fresh ways and is a treasury of arguments and data that cannot help but make us think anew about what it means to be American. Huntington says he writes as "a patriot and a scholar" and leaves no doubt that a patriot is one who identifies with a national tradition that was present at the American creation, was consolidated after the Civil War, and was unchallenged until the 1960s. "All societies," he writes, "face recurring threats to their existence, to which they eventually succumb." But the American ending can be postponed by a determined effort to restore national vitality and identity. In the large picture of history, "the American nation is a fragile and recent human construction." Of course history is unpredictable, but "the greatest surprise might be if the United States in 2025 were still much the same country it was in 2000 rather than a very different country (or countries) with very different conceptions of itself and its identity than it had a quarter century earlier." We have less than twenty-five years? It sounds alarming, and some will dismiss it as alarmist, but the more one ponders the argument the more one is inclined to the conclusion that it is, at the very least, not entirely implausible.

A Culture, Not a People

Our national identity is defined by the American Creed (e.g., the Declaration of Independence) and, much more importantly, by American culture, which is indisputably Anglo-Protestant. "The Creed was the product of the distinct Anglo-Protestant culture of the founding settlers of America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Key elements of that culture include: the English language; Christianity; religious commitment; English concepts of the rule of law, the responsibility of rulers, and the rights of individuals; and dissenting Protestant values of individualism, the work ethic, and the belief that humans have the ability and the duty to try to create a heaven on earth, a 'city on a hill.'" The important thing, Huntington emphasizes, is Anglo-Protestant culture, not Anglo-Protestant people. It is precisely the achievement of Anglo-Protestant culture that it has largely eliminated ethnicity and race as factors in belonging and achieving. If anyone doubts that for four centuries Anglo-Protestant culture has defined American identity, simply ask what America would be if it had been settled not by British Protestants but by French, Spanish, or Portuguese Catholics. The answer? "It would not be America; it would be Quebec, Mexico, or Brazil."

Throughout the argument, Huntington surprises with claims, impressively backed by documentation, that cut against what everybody knows about America. For instance, he says it is at best a half-truth that this is "a nation of immigrants." Almost half (49 percent) of the present population of the U.S. is descended from the people who were here in 1790. That is hard to believe in New York or Boston or Chicago, where most of the people who write books about America live. We also forget, says Huntington, that periods of massive immigration are the exception and not the rule in American history. Since the "reform" of immigration law in 1965, we have had the longest sustained period of massive immigration in our history.

Noteworthy, too, is the book's treatment of the origins of the Creed. Other nations were formed, and are still formed, by conflicts between distinct peoples and cultures. Former colonies, for example, justify their claim to independence on the principle that it is wrong for one people to be ruled by another people. With America it was very different. In terms of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, and language, Americans and the British were one people. A different justification for independence was required; hence the Creed. Louis Hartz and a host of other scholars are wrong, Huntington contends, in claiming that America's origins are in the "liberal," "Lockean," or "Enlightenment" thought of Europe. America was America before Locke was born or the Creed devised. "Scholars who attempt to identify the American 'liberal consensus' or Creed solely with Lockean ideas and the Enlightenment are giving a secular interpretation to the religious sources of American values."

The Triumph of "Pluralism"

Immigrants in the past were, for the most part, eager to be assimilated into America's Anglo-Protestant culture. That was the famous "melting pot." The de rigueur metaphor today is that of a cultural mosaic or tossed salad. Back in 1915, Horace Kallen first challenged the idea of a coherent American identity, pro-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

moting the idea of "cultural pluralism." Kallen's day has come around at last, according to Huntington. The bulk of the book is a detailed examination of the ways in which American identity is being rapidly deconstructed: by neoconservatives of an imperial bent who proclaim America to be "the universal nation"; by transnational business leaders for whom the global market trumps American interests; by intellectual cosmopolitans and other moralists who teach that patriotism is a vice that must yield to allegiance to "humanity." On all these issues there is a wide and widening gap between elites and the overwhelming majority of Americans who remain strongly committed to the American identity and its attendant patriotic virtues.

Working, however inadvertently, in tandem with these elites is uncontrolled immigration, mainly from Mexico. Even people who think of themselves as pro-immigration say that the U.S. must be in charge of the immigrant flow. One of the great merits of the book is in demonstrating the myriad ways in which immigration, legal and illegal, is wildly out of control, and has been for decades. Organizational leaders claiming to represent Mexican immigrants make no secret of their goal to achieve a demographic, cultural, and even political *reconquista* of large regions of the U.S. taken from Mexico in the 1830s and 1840s. The Latino, mainly Cuban, takeover of Miami, turning it into a Latin American city, is not all that different, says Huntington, from what is happening in many other cities. Next to oil, remittances sent back to Mexico by citizens living and working in the U.S. is that country's largest source of wealth. The U.S. government has largely acquiesced in letting the Mexican government certify immigrants for government benefits in this country. Our schools promote bilingualism and multiculturalism at the expense of American identity. The top fifty colleges in this country do not require even one course in American history. In a survey of the top fifty-five colleges, 40 percent of seniors could not say within a half-century when the Civil War was fought.

Dual Loyalties

More than seven million Americans are "ampersands," and the number is growing fast. An ampersand is someone who is at the same time a citizen of the U.S. and of another country, usually with a primary attachment and political allegiance to the other country. Rather provocatively, Huntington suggests that many American Jews belong in this category. The question of "dual loyalty" to Israel and the U.S. is, to say the least, controversial. It is a question with a very particular and, for the most part, disreputable history. If it is addressed, it should be addressed with the seriousness and nuance it deserves, and not simply mentioned in passing as a circumstance comparable to, say, a U.S. citizen who values more highly his citizenship in the Dominican Republic.

The decisions before us, says Huntington, are stark: Will America be cosmopolitan, imperial, or national? He sums up his case this way:

> Cosmopolitanism and imperialism attempt to reduce or to eliminate the social, political, and cultural differences between America and other societies. A national approach would recognize and accept what distinguishes America from those societies. America cannot become the world and still be America. Other people cannot become American and still be themselves. America is different, and that difference is defined in large part by its Anglo-Protestant culture and its religiosity. The alternative to cosmopolitanism and imperialism is nationalism devoted to the preservation and enhancement of those qualities that have defined America since its founding.

Huntington has clearly made his decision and is confident that almost all Americans outside the above-mentioned elites agree with him, as will become increasingly evident politically when more people realize what is happening to their country. *Who Are We?* will, I expect, be widely read and debated, and deservedly so. A University Professor at Harvard and one of the country's more influential intellectuals over more than thirty years, Samuel P. Huntington cannot be easily ignored. Many will lament that he is making respectable anxieties and arguments that have, in recent history, been at the margins of our public life. Others will be mightily encouraged that, at last, someone of indubitable standing has had the courage to say the obvious. My own response to the book is conflicted. I am pleased to be an American patriot, and have given a large part of my life to explaining the singularity of the American experiment. I believe that Huntington's depiction of the "Hispanization" of the country is excessively dour, while I agree on the need to bring immigration under American control. So I find myself in substantial agreement with most of his argument. Among the seriously problematic parts of Huntington's case, however, is his understanding of "Anglo-Protestant" culture.

They Know They Are Americans

It is beyond dispute that America's constituting culture and institutions are Anglo (meaning English, Scottish, and Welsh) and that, with very few exceptions,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

those present at the creation were Protestant. More than that, they were dissenting Protestants of various stripes, which has everything to do with the strong streak of individualism and skepticism toward authority in the American ethos. There is, however, an unnecessary in-your-face problem with equating "American" with "Anglo-Protestant." If one wants to revitalize "American" identity, it is not smart and it is not true to tell Germans, Italians, Poles, Jews, Filipinos, and a host of others that, if they really want to be Americans, they must become Anglo-Protestants. And, incidentally, there is no point in reinforcing the Hispanic view that all non-Hispanics are "Anglos."

It does not detract from the decisive Anglo-Protestant contribution to acknowledge that American identity is also the cumulative and continuing experience of all who understand themselves to be American. While the idea of our being a nation of immigrants may be exaggerated—Huntington notes that, from 1820 to 2000, the foreign-born averaged "only" slightly over ten percent of the population—what most Americans understand by America is inseparable from immigration. It may be that half the population is descended from the people who were here in 1790, but the other half is not. An effort to revive American identity by equating America with "Anglo-Protestant" will meet with understandable resistance from many millions who are neither Anglo nor dissenting Protestant but who know that they are Americans and are confident that they have brought to the American experience more than exotic cuisines and ethnic color.

The question of whether American identity must be explicitly described as Christian is considerably more complicated. Against the eager celebrants of a multicultural and multireligious mosaic, Huntington notes that non-Christians—people of other religions or no professed religion—"are tiny minorities." He quotes Irving Kristol, who says, "Americans have always thought of themselves as a Christian nation, equally tolerant of all religions so long as they were congruent with traditional Judeo-Christian morality. But equal toleration never meant perfect equality of status in fact." Christianity is not legally established, "but it is established informally, nevertheless." This, says Kristol, is a reality Jews must learn to accept.

Huntington writes, "Americans are still a Christian people, as they have been throughout their long history." After an extensive discussion of history and survey research, he concludes, as have many others, that the last half of the twentieth century was the beginning of a fourth "great awakening," making America more emphatically Christian than it has been since the late nineteenth century. "The proportion of Christians in America rivals or exceeds the proportion of Jews in Israel, of Muslims in Egypt, of Hindus in India, and of Orthodox believers in Russia." As for what I described twenty years ago as "the naked public square," Huntington believes that it is fast changing as religion becomes more publicly assertive, and both the political culture and the courts become more accommodating toward that assertiveness. Such facts of life are fiercely resisted by the aforementioned elites who, Huntington suggests, are engaged in a futile defense of the naked public square. Without calling for it in so many words, he anticipates an intensified populist rebellion against those who, as Marxists used to say, control the commanding heights of culture.

The Catholic Question

The Christian particularity of American identity is somewhat disguised by the Creed and by what some scholars call the American civil religion, and many have permitted themselves to be taken in by the disguise. Huntington writes, "While the American Creed is Protestantism without God, the American civil religion is Christianity without Christ." He means that the Creed is Protestantism and the civil religion is Christianity, but, whether for reasons of politeness or of ideological secularism, many Americans maintain the disguise by not mentioning God or Christ in public. Huntington is well aware of what would appear to be the great exception to his definition of American identity, namely, the Catholic Church. It is communal rather than individualistic, hierarchical rather than democratic, and it values adherence rather than dissent. But all that was yesterday, according to Huntington, and it explains the long history of anti-Catholicism that, quite understandably, claimed that Catholicism was fundamentally un-American. But at long last, and with a great assist from the Second Vatican Council, Catholicism has surrendered and we now see "the transformation of a Roman Catholic Church into an American Catholic Church."

The Catholic Church, writes Huntington, has accepted the fact that it has become "another denomination." "Catholics are proud of their American identity, the Americanization of their church, and its emergence as a central and influential institution of American society. For understandable reasons, however, they do not like people referring to the 'Protestantization' of their religion." But becoming Protestant, suggests Huntington, is the necessary price of assimilation. "Progressive" Catholics who welcome the displacement of the Catholic Church with what conservatives deride as "AmChurch" will be encouraged by Huntington's description of what has hap-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pened. More orthodox Catholics, such as Francis Cardinal George and David Schindler, will ruefully agree with it, deploring as they do the degree to which the Church has been taken captive by an essentially Protestant culture. I am convinced that the struggle between Catholic identity and Huntington's version of the American identity is far from over. Within the Church, younger priests, theologians, and lay leaders are vigorously challenging the idea that the "success story" of Catholicism in America is that Catholics are now just like everybody else. The current, if belated, efforts of bishops to discipline public figures who defy church teaching is among the evidences that the Church has not entirely resigned itself to being only "another denomination" or a religious organization with a Roman franchise for serving a niche market among American spiritualities. The tensions between what the Catholic Church claims to be and the sociological dynamics of American individualism and voluntarism are real and ongoing, and they have not been resolved in favor of the spiritual marketplace of Huntington's dissenting Protestantism. Not yet. Please God, not ever.

The Strong Foundation

Huntington's patriotism is a jealous God. He is gratified by a survey showing that 91 percent of Americans are "extremely" or "very" proud to be American. As he is gratified by another survey that asked, "How important is being an American to you, where zero is not at all important and ten is the most important thing in your life?" Forty-five percent of respondents chose ten; another 38 percent chose a number between six and nine; 2 percent chose 0. The most important thing in your life? More important than your family? More important than your allegiance to Christ and his Church? If those questions had been asked, the responses would likely be very different. But it is troubling that Huntington is encouraged by the suggestion that a near-majority of Americans say being American is the most important thing in their lives. That is not patriotism. That is idolatry.

Nonetheless, *Who Are We?* is a book to be read and debated. Assuming the desirability of America's survival, it sets forth with admirable lucidity why the survival of this or any nation requires a robust national identity, and why identity necessarily involves a widely understood distinction between "we" and "they." Huntington makes a convincing case that our out-of-control immigration practices (they hardly deserve to be called policies) are seriously threatening the national identity. He persuasively argues that the American Creed is dependent upon American culture and that at the heart of that culture is religion. He exposes with appropriate relish the dangerous fatuities of business, political, and intellectual elites who preach a gospel of globalization that presumably makes national identity obsolete. For all this we owe him. But it is a mistake, both rhetorical and substantive, to so elevate the constituting and continuing importance of Anglo-Protestantism. Rhetorically, it invites resistance to his argument from those who are not and do not want to be Anglo-Protestants. Substantively, it obscures the reality of a national identity sustained and significantly reshaped by a diverse people living out their commitment to an American experiment that was, to be sure, begun by Anglo-Protestants, but by Anglo-Protestants who laid a foundation strong enough to bear the weight of unanticipated multitudes whose lived experience, in unending romance and quarrel with the normative beginning, is the American identity.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ This is a true story. At least the *Seattle Times* says so. Two lesbians living together decide they want a baby, so one gets pregnant with the help of sperm from a gay friend and a daughter is born. The two women break up and, after a while, the mother marries the gay friend. Now, with the help of the ACLU and gay activist lawyers who know that a gay man cannot go straight, the other woman goes to court to claim parental rights on the grounds that she was living with the mother when the mother became a mother and is, therefore, also a mother. As of this writing, she and her attorneys expect to prevail. Andrew Sullivan would no doubt point out that such confusion and heartbreak would be avoided if we had same-sex marriage. Then the two lesbians could simply have obtained a divorce before the one remarried, and well-established rules would apply regarding visitation rights and other claims on the child. In short, this situation would be, in Mr. Sullivan's favored phrase, virtually normal—it being assumed that virtual normality is about as much normality as our society can manage.

■ Many, many years ago I wrote *In Defense of People* (1971), the first book-length critique of environmental extremism. It was provoked, in significant part, by Paul Ehrlich, he of the "population bomb," who predicted in 1968: "The battle to feed all of humanity is over. In the 1970s, the world will undergo famines—

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death." In subsequent books, Ehrlich predicted that by the 1980s "mankind will enter a genuine age of scarcity" in which "accessible supplies of many key minerals will be facing depletion." In fact, the world's food supply has tripled and key minerals are available in greater abundance than ever. Reviewing Ehrlich's latest book, *One with Nineveh*, Ronald Bailey writes, "Naturally, Mr. Ehrlich has won a MacArthur Foundation genius award and a Heinz Award for the environment." (Teresa Heinz Kerry, chairman.) "So why pay him any notice?" asks Bailey. In Greek mythology "the prophetess Cassandra makes true predictions and no one believes her; Mr. Ehrlich makes false predictions and they are widely believed. The gloomier he is and the faultier he proves to be as a prophet, the more honored he becomes, even in his own country." That puts it very nicely. What provoked me about Ehrlich, and also suggested the title of my book, is that he sees people, and especially poor people, as the enemy. Way back when Jesse Jackson was pro-life, he spoke about LBJ's war on poverty being replaced by a war on poor people. Paul Ehrlich was and is among the chief propagandists for that war. The chilling thing is that he and those who lionize him seem to *want* his predictions to come true. It is a disposition that is at the heart of the darkness of what is aptly called the culture of death.

■ "Now it's their turn to get it," some might smugly observe. If, that is, they even knew about the brutal ethnic cleansing currently being carried out by Albanian Muslims against the Orthodox Christians in Kosovo. Remember Kosovo? That was when Sandy Berger, President Clinton's national security advisor, boasted that U.S. power is on the side of Islam. It is true that many Serbian Orthodox sided with the now defunct regime of Slobodan Milosevic when it was engaged in ethnic cleansing, but that in no way mitigates the tragedy and injustice of what is happening now. Muslim fanatics have destroyed or vandalized more than a hundred Orthodox churches and dispersed or killed thousands. Lawrence Uzzell writes, "Some of these churches had been places of Christian worship since the fourteenth century, jewels of medieval architecture treasured by art historians worldwide." The goal of the Albanians, says Uzzell, is a purely Albanian Kosovo free of any Serbian presence, even of memories of that ancient presence. "It's as if a Palestinian state were to win control of Jerusalem and then start demolishing every architectural relic of Judaism." The ineffective NATO command is transferring patrol duties to the even more ineffective UN administration, which passes them on to the totally ineffective, and sometimes complicit, local police. Kosovo, readers will remember, was one of those successful "humanitarian interventions." Among policy makers here, it is frequently recalled with pride. Only the people left behind have been forgotten. *Lacrimae rerum.*

■ Now I'm in for it. Please, hold off on the protests and let me explain. A long and generally fair story in the *New York Times* on Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT) says that I "confided" in the reporter, Laurie Goodstein, that there are aspects of Evangelical culture that Catholics are uneasy about, such as "the overly confident claims to being born again, the forced happiness and joy, the awful music." No, I'm not going to complain that I was quoted out of context, although of course I was. The context was an interview of well over an hour, and publishing it all would have taken up a large part of that Sunday's paper. Ms. Goodstein asked about tensions between Evangelical and Catholic religious cultures, and I offered an extended list of such tensions, including the items quoted above. The "overly confident claims" sound to many Catholics like the sin of presumption, while Evangelicals intend what they call "blessed assurance" or, if they are Calvinists, "the perseverance of the saints." The seemingly forced expressions of happiness and joy (I should have added "seemingly") reflect an Evangelical accent on the subjective and experiential, as distinct from the Catholic accent on the objective and sacramental. As for awful music, Catholics know that Evangelicals have no monopoly on that, but I had just been to an Evangelical rally in which the worship (or was it entertainment?) was an emaciated-looking young man with an electric guitar working himself into a frenzy with ten minutes of a loud and escalating screech, "Jeeeesus, I love YOU!!!" There is awful, and then there is really awful. But, mind you, all this was in the context of describing to Ms. Goodstein the stereotypes that Evangelicals and Catholics commonly have of one another. Don't get me wrong. I love Evangelicals. Some of my best friends are Evangelicals. Evangelicals are swell. (Chuck Colson, can you help me out here?)

■ "That's how the communion crumbles," is an Anglican play on an old saying as various jerry-built arrangements are made for bishops from Africa and Asia to assume oversight of traditional Anglicans in North America who are protesting what they view as heretical innovations, most recently the consecration of a gay bishop in New Hampshire. Something similar is happening in the Church of Sweden, where candidates are refused ordination if they do not go

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

along with the ordination of women. Bishop Walter Obare, the presiding bishop of the Lutheran Church in Kenya, has indicated his readiness to ordain men in Sweden who he says suffer under a liberal "oppression" and "persecution" that has contributed to the fact that "historical Protestantism is rapidly crumbling" in countries such as Sweden. In a sharp exchange of letters, K. G. Hammar, Archbishop of the Church of Sweden, stated in no uncertain terms that any priests ordained by Obare would belong to the Lutheran Church in Kenya, not to the Church of Sweden. Of those in Sweden who object to the ordination of women, Hammar says, "We seem to have reached the painful situation where the wish for some to stay together is no longer as strong as the need to stress one's own perspective." If Sweden persists in its policy, Obare wrote in response to Hammar, "I must with other Lutheran bishops take upon myself the heavy and historic burden to heed the call of oppressed Lutheranism in your church and to ordain bishops and pastors in the Church of Sweden on the basis of emergency legitimacy set forth in the Lutheran Confessions. As Lutherans, we must also understand that this kind of calling comes from the Head of the Church himself. Who dares disobey him?" Obare refers to women's ordination as "this Gnostic novelty [that] is now obviously claiming, not only autocracy in the Church, but also tyranny, since it cannot tolerate even minimal coexistence with classical Christianity." Dr. Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), to which both churches belong, invited the two bishops to a meeting aimed at working out their differences. Hammar flatly refused, saying, "I do not want to give the impression that there is anything to negotiate." That response probably did not surprise Bishop Obare who wrote in his letter that he and "many other Lutheran colleagues" fear that they are witnessing in Sweden and elsewhere "the rise of a secular, intolerant, bureaucratic fundamentalism inimical to the word of God and familiar from various church struggles against totalitarian ideologies during the twentieth century." Noting that Anglicans are having similar problems, *Kyrkans Tidning* (Church News) asked LWF's Noko, "Are we witnessing a growing disintegration of the worldwide church, giving us a more liberal northwestern part and a more conservative southern?" Said Noko, "No. There is no such geographical line. And this is not a specifically African issue." One might suggest it is more of a theological line, with Africans being less inhibited in asserting that Scripture and the sixteenth-century confessional writings are normative for the ordering of the Lutheran communion.

■ Add two more books to the long and dreary list of tracts against the authoritarian and undemocratic ways of the Catholic Church. They are of slight interest, but in reviewing them Christopher Caldwell of the *Weekly Standard* arrives at an interestingly phrased conclusion: "But it is hard to see how democratic reforms can arrest the crisis in Western Catholicism. For what can 'religious liberty' mean in the context of a *doctrine*? In free societies, dissent gets expressed through 'exit' rather than 'voice,' to use the economist Albert O. Hirschman's terms. The less doctrinaire a parishioner, the more likely he is to find his preferred spiritual product elsewhere. So the democratic world may offer the Church a hard choice—between growing more reactionary or dying. Perhaps the Church's real arrogance was to assume at the time of Vatican II that it had the standing to open a dialogue with modernity. The Church could never command that non-Catholics listen to it; all it could do was expose its faithful to the siren song of democracy, capitalism and sex." For those to whom the democratic world—read: liberal culture—is the default position, "reactionary" is the irresistible word. But one can also envision the Church in her restored integrity providing an attractive "contrast society" for people wearied by the discontents of liberal culture. That does not mean that the Church is countercultural, although at times she must be against the world for the world. The Catholic genius is always for the world, proposing a "more excellent way" (1 Corinthians 12:31) toward the realization of the best to which the culture aspires. "Arrogance" is not the right word, but the Holy Spirit who guided the Council did not expunge in the bishops a human capacity for misreading "the signs of the times." This is notably evident in *Gaudium et Spes*, the constitution on the Church in the modern world. What was new in the constitution, and therefore what caught attention, was the very hopeful (optimistic?) depiction of the modern world. I once asked a bishop who had played a major part in drafting the constitution whether the document was not marked by a certain naïveté about the modern world. After a moment's thought, he said, "Perhaps." He then quickly added, "But, if so, it was an evangelical naïveté." I have no doubt about that. A careful reading of *Gaudium et Spes* shows that the doctrinal tradition is uncompromised and the necessary cautions against worldly optimism are not absent. Contra Caldwell, it was not wrong to assume that the Church had the standing "to open a dialogue with modernity." What other religious institution had or has a better claim to such standing? And it is obvious that the Church cannot "command" that non-Catholics listen to it or, for that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

matter, compel Catholics to listen. Yet Caldwell makes an important point. It was not "all it could do," and in fact it was far from all it did do, but it is true that at the Council the Church did "expose its faithful to the siren song of democracy, capitalism, and sex." Inadvertently, of course. It is a risk that comes with reading the signs of the times. And with believing that, if you are nice to the world, the world will be nice to you. A measure of what can look like evangelical naïveté may be unavoidable, however, in a community that tries to be faithful to the one of whom it is said, "For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him." That assumes, as *Gaudium et Spes* did say, although many did not hear it—perhaps because they did not want to hear it—that the world cannot save itself.

■ A Pentecostal pastor robbed five New England banks before being caught and sent to jail. John T. McNeil, the prosecutor, remarked, "What I find most interesting about this case is that even though this was a man of God who was devoted to the church, he was involved in some pretty sophisticated bank robberies." Pastor Russell Saltzman of *Forum Letter* takes umbrage, seeing this as a slur on the capabilities of clergy. Touchy, touchy.

■ Emmet Kearney takes me to task for saying that a survey showed that "only 21 percent of [college] administrators knew that the First Amendment guarantees religious freedom" (While We're At It, February). He notes that the survey question asked them to name any First Amendment right, and 79 percent named a right other than the freedom of religion. Mr. Kearney is right: that is much less worrying.

■ A good many conservatives think that the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is a good example of the kind of thing government has no business doing. It may not have changed minds but it blunted complaints when President Bush appointed Dana Gioia the chairman of the NEA. Gioia is a distinguished poet and has a way of winsomely engaging those who disagree with him, as many do. He was also our Erasmus Lecturer last year and we are looking forward to publishing his text, which, we are assured, is undergoing final, final revision. With Gioia in charge, the administration has even increased, modestly, the NEA's $139 million budget, which is about the budget line for paper clips in government agencies thought to matter in Washington. But of course the NEA matters greatly to many people in the arts. John Rockwell, a critic at the *New York Times*, is deeply ambivalent about the new management at the NEA. He doesn't exactly call for a return to the tumultuous times of Andres Serrano's "Piss Christ," Chris Ofili's "Blessed Virgin of the Elephant Dung," or the late Robert Mapplethorpe's "X Portfolio," which celebrated the nuances of anal intercourse, but Mr. Rockwell does seem to miss the good old days. Rockwell's reflection is titled, "Help for the Old and Safe, Neglect for the New and Challenging." He notes that Gioia is promoting traveling Shakespeare companies to do live theater in small cities, schools, and military bases, along with touring groups performing jazz and other American masterpieces. Rockwell writes, "This is all well and good. Really it is. But it does provoke some questions." When he has to assure the reader that he "really" thinks this is all well and good, the reader may suspect he doesn't really mean it, and it turns out he doesn't. Gioia says his program is a "win-win" approach to the arts, to which Rockwell protests: "But what happened to multicultural disdain for dead white European males? If touring Shakespeare is such a win-win deal, just how does transgressive, transsexual, multiracial, confrontational performance art 'win'?" How indeed. Thus, according to Rockwell, does Gioia neglect "the new and challenging." One might respond that *Macbeth* is a great deal more challenging than Mapplethorpe and, as for the latter being new, pornography goes way on back. Rockwell complains, "Rich people support major arts institutions disproportionately, and rich people are mostly conservative." It is true that a disproportionate amount of financial support for the arts comes from rich people. It probably has something to do with the fact that rich people, generally speaking, have more money than poor people. As for rich people being "mostly conservative," however, one has to wonder whose patronage made the likes of Serrano, Ofili, and Mapplethorpe rich. Adolescents of all ages who would prove they are artists by behaving badly and shocking the grownups also want to be rich. They understandably grouse that not enough money goes to support the "transgressive, transsexual, multiracial, confrontational performance art," but such bad behaviors would not abound without a lot of people paying for them. And some of what Mr. Rockwell and others deem "new and challenging" may, it is quite possible, some day be recognized as art worth preserving as part of the American heritage. Of the NEA approach Rockwell writes, "Certifying masterpieces and making them available to all is not inherently evil." That is a magnanimous concession. Evil perhaps, but not inherently evil. Then comes an even greater concession: "Edgy art was made long before public arts sup-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

port became a reality in this country; not all rich patrons are conservative." So it seems the new and the challenging are safe after all. And all without taxpayers being forced to pay for being insulted by the antics of those who hold them in contempt. It may not be entirely a win-win approach, and it may not change the minds of those who think the NEA should be abolished, but the direction taken by Dana Gioia holds the promise of preserving and sharing a heritage of proven achievement, to which the work of those who outgrow their captivity to "the new and challenging" may one day be admitted.

■ On April 23, 1993, after having fasted for several days, which was a regular part of his spiritual discipline, Cesar Chavez died in his sleep. Rees Lloyd, a reader who served as an attorney for Chavez for twenty years, writes to tell me about his personal experience of Chavez' deep and vibrant faith. At his funeral in Delano, California, fifty thousand people joined in processing along the hot and dusty roads, and a message from Pope John Paul II was read at the service. Chavez was, of course, a hero of monumental proportions to the Mexican-American farm workers he organized. But he was also much celebrated by others. California, for instance, has a Cesar Chavez Day. Mr. Lloyd includes the poignantly telling observation that it is a paid holiday for government workers. For the farm workers it is another day in the fields.

■ *Rivers of Gold* is the story of the rise of the Spanish empire. *Publishers Weekly* scolds the author, Hugh Thomas, for insensitivity to the cultural "other." The review includes this: "Indeed, readers free from colonial prejudice will be surprised to find themselves also written out of history: 'Who can doubt now,' Thomas asks rhetorically, 'that the Spanish were right to denounce the idea of religion based on human sacrifice or the simple worship of the sun or the rain?'" Presumably those who are free from colonial prejudice are open to, or even harbor no doubts about, the merits of a religion that sacrifices human beings to the gods. But then, as the reviewer notes, Mr. Thomas has become ever more conservative, even to the point of serving as an adviser to Margaret Thatcher, and we know how narrow-minded she was about human sacrifice.

■ I have from time to time been critical of Alan Wolfe, Boston College's man on religion and public life and contributing editor at the *New Republic*. So I'm not surprised when, in a recent article, he refers to "the small and sectarian journal FIRST THINGS." One might, very delicately, observe that the *New Republic* is almost as small and is a great deal more sectarian, if sectarian means narrowly preoccupied with partisan politics. Although I expect that by "sectarian" he means religious. Wolfe is reviewing books on atheism in America and, as a self-described nonbeliever, wishes that some of the authors were less fervently religious in their atheism. He is more sympathetic to *Doubt: A History* by Jennifer Hecht because "Hecht is the rare doubter who can simultaneously disagree with people of faith while granting them respect and taking their ideas seriously." That is obviously how Mr. Wolfe would like to think of himself. And in his books, such as *One Nation, After All* and *The Transformation of American Religion*, it is how he claims most Americans think. Religion and nonreligion, he writes, "raise first questions about the world that deserve heated exchange." But such questions must be kept safely distanced from our public life, and he indulges himself by whacking the Bush administration for violating that liberal dogma. "Whatever our differences over faith," Wolfe writes, "Americans belong to a common political community in which, assuming that we will continue to live together, we must find ways of talking to each other not just past each other." I am resigned to living together with Alan Wolfe but confess that it would be a great deal easier if he followed the example he says is set by Ms. Hecht in granting others respect and taking their ideas seriously—notably the ideas of those who disagree with Mr. Wolfe's belief that liberalism trumps truth and that, therefore, "first questions" must be banished from public life. Contra Mr. Wolfe, first questions—as in "We hold these truths to be self-evident"—are the foundation and not the enemy of the continuing American experiment. He says we must find ways of talking to each other and not just past each other. I am talking to you, Alan.

■ The Weather Underground was a particularly nasty part of the radicalisms that emerged from the 1960s. Shooting cops and that sort of thing. Now they are examined in a documentary, "The Weather Underground," and it is reviewed by Johnny Zokovitch in a recent issue of *The Catholic Peace Voice*, an organ of the Pax Christi movement. "This provocative film should give members of the peace movement and those who espouse nonviolence reason to pause and engage in a bit of self-examination. While many activists then and now would criticize the violence of the Weather Underground, we must recognize and pay serious attention to the depth of their commitment—a commitment that would not allow these young people to be satisfied with the often choreographed, low-risk protest that so often passes for dissent in our country. While disagreeing with their use of violence, we who espouse nonvio-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lence as a force for social change must be challenged by how much these young people were willing to sacrifice and how drastically their lives were disrupted by their opposition to a government steeped in the evils of militarism, materialism, and racism." If the ends are so admirable, the pacifists of Pax Christi are given "reason to pause and engage in a bit of self-examination." Might not noble intentions and "depth of commitment" justify just a little mayhem and murder?

■ A reader sends me an old copy of *The Lutheran Witness* from May 1961, which carries a story on my installation as pastor of St. John the Evangelist in Brooklyn. The report says, "This church offers weekly Communion to colored and white people at the same altar rail." The reader wonders whether this was written in approval or in order to warn potential visitors. In any event, it is good to remember that it was thought worthy of note at the time. Conservatives too often play to stereotype as the stupid party by refusing to acknowledge that, amidst the encircling gloom, there are undeniable instances of moral progress.

■ I have a measure of respect for people who remain aloof from politics, and I have a number of friends who never vote because, they say, "It only encourages them." There are more important—much more important—things in life than politics. That being said, I get a mite impatient with people who seem to think it a mark of political sophistication to say that our political system only gives us a choice between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. There are even purists in the pro-life movement who say there's not a dime's worth of difference between Kerry and Bush: "Neither of them is going to repeal *Roe v. Wade*." That's true, of course, but there are things to be done on the way to the hoped-for repeal of that odious decision and the lethal logic behind it. And it is arrogantly obtuse to ignore the fact that President Bush has done some of those things and will likely do others. This past April he signed the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, making it clear that an attack on a pregnant woman is an attack on two people. Last year he signed the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act that outlaws one of the most manifestly brutal forms of child killing. Yes, its implementation is being blocked by some courts, but that only underscores the importance of Bush's efforts to get federal judges who understand themselves to be servants and not masters of the law. In 2002, Bush signed the Born Alive Infants Protection Act, which ensures that every infant born alive—including those surviving an abortion procedure—is considered a person under federal law. Has that saved many lives? Probably not, but it is crucially important because it establishes in law that whether or not a baby is a person does not depend on whether the baby is "wanted" by a woman and her abortionist. And anyone who thinks that establishing that is not important has not read the reasoning of *Roe v. Wade*. President Bush has also strongly supported a ban on human cloning, arguing that life is not a commodity but a creation. Babies must not be manufactured for research or body parts, nor "designed" to customer specification. In one of his first acts in office, he restored the Mexico City Policy that had been put in place by Ronald Reagan and then rescinded by President Clinton. That policy means no federal money for organizations promoting or performing abortions in other nations. One could list other initiatives of this president in strengthening families, encouraging adoptions, supporting abstinence for young people, and other issues closely related to the moral vitality of our society. To pretend there are no substantive differences between the candidates in this presidential election is simply dumb. (Lest we jeopardize our tax exemption, a note to whoever at the Internal Revenue Service has the happy job of reading FT: the above is not an endorsement of President Bush. It is a service to our readers in clarifying issues. We readily recognize that people may, for reasons they deem sufficient, vote for his opponent.)

■ It has been a long time since I have so enjoyed an intellectually ambitious work of theology. "Enjoy" is exactly the right word, since joy is at the heart of David Bentley Hart's *The Beauty of the Infinite* (Eerdmans). Those familiar with Hart's writings in these pages will not be surprised to learn that the book is not always light reading. Despite the convoluted word games and superfluity of neologisms, however—he is, after all, engaging the postmodernist exertions of the likes of Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault—delight is the theme of Hart's Balthasarian argument about human desiring and the beauty of God. For further details, see the review of the book by Geoffrey Wainwright in the March issue of FT. Herewith an excerpt from the book (with the author's permission) in response to those who, in the tradition of Nietzsche, would escape from dead and deadly Apollo to the delusory delights of Dionysius. In that tradition, it may be recalled, the crucifixion of Christ is construed as Christianity's repudiation of the earthly and fleshly, to which Dionysian intoxication is the alternative. But the wine of Dionysius, says Hart, makes human fellowship impossible, being but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a brute absorption into anonymity and violence. Hart writes: "In fact, if I may be permitted an excursus, it is conceivable that a theological answer to Nietzsche could be developed entirely in terms of the typology of wine. After all, the wine of Dionysus is no doubt of the coarsest vintage, intended to blind with drunkenness rather than enliven whimsy; it is fruit of the same vine with which Dionysus bridged the Euphrates, after flaying alive the king of Damascus, so that he could conquer India for viniculture (so we know from Plutarch, Pausanias, Strabo, Arrian, Diodorus, Siculus, and others); and of the same vine for which Lycurgus mistook his son Dryas when driven mad for offending the wild god, causing him to cut Dryas down for 'pruning' (as Homer and Apollodorus report); the vine that destroyed the pirates who would not bear Dionysus to Naxos (so say Homer, Apollodorus, and Ovid); it is the wine that inflamed the maenads to rend Pentheus limb from limb, led by his own mother Agave (as Euripides and others record); the wine repeatedly associated with madness, anthropophagy, slaughter, warfare, and rapine (one need consider only the Dionysian cult at Orchomenus—with its ritual act of random murder—and the story of the daughters of Minyas—frenzy, infanticide, cannibalism—from which it sprang). The wine of Christian Scripture, on the other hand, is first and foremost a divine blessing and image of God's bounty (Genesis 27:28; Deuteronomy 7:13; 11:14; Psalms 104:15; Proverbs 3:10; Isaiah 25:6; 65:8; Jeremiah 31:12; Joel 2:19-24; 3:18; Amos 9:13-14; Zechariah 9:17), and an appropriate thank offering by which to declare Israel's love of God (Exodus 29:40; Leviticus 23:13; Numbers 15:5-10; 18:12; 28:14; Deuteronomy 14:23; 15:14; 18:4); it is the wine that 'cheers the hearts of gods and men' (Judges 9:13), to be drunk and shared with those for whom nothing is prepared on the day holy to the Lord (Nehemiah 8:10), the sign of God's renewed covenant with his people (Isaiah 55:1-3), the drink of lovers (Song of Solomon 5:1), and the very symbol of love (7:2, 9; 8:2), whose absence is the eventide of all joy (Isaiah 24:11); it is, moreover, the wine of agape and the feast of fellowship, in which Christ first vouchsafed a sign of his divinity, in a place of rejoicing, at Cana—a wine of the highest quality—when the kingdom showed itself 'out of season' (John 2:3-10); the wine, again, forsaken with all the good things of creation, when Christ went to his death, but promised to be drunk anew at the banquet table of his Father's kingdom, and from which—embittered with myrrh—he was forced to turn his lips when on the cross (Mark 15:23; Matthew 27:34); the wine, finally, whose joy is imparted to the Church again, and eternally, with the fire of Pentecost (Acts 2:13), and in which the fellowship of Christ and his flock is reborn with every celebration of the Eucharist. Of course, Nietzsche was a teetotaler and could judge the merit of neither vintage, and so it is perhaps unsurprising that his attempts at oino-theology should betray a somewhat pedestrian palate."

■ Pastor Russ Saltzman of *Forum Letter* comments on John Mason Neale's translation of the Palm Sunday hymn, "All Glory, Laud, and Honor," composed in Latin by the ninth-century St. Theodulph of Orleans. He notes that almost all hymnals omit one verse of Neale's fine translation:

Be thou, O Lord, the rider
And I the little ass
That to the Holy city
Together we may pass.

The language sounds rude to contemporary ears, but the verse should not be offensive to those familiar with G. K. Chesterton's marvelous poem, "The Donkey."

When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood
Then surely I was born.

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

■ It seems that groups of ROFTERS (Readers of FIRST THINGS) are sprouting all over. Here is a letter from Kevin Wainwright, a Presbyterian chaplain with the 30th Brigade, North Carolina National Guard, stationed in Iraq. He explains how FT has been "a vehicle of God's grace" among the soldiers there and includes a picture of eight of his men—with Father W. Kelly, a Catholic chaplain, in the middle—holding copies of FT. If you're interested in starting a ROFTERS group, probably closer to home, contact Vincent Druding at

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vjd@firstthings.com. Here are some new ROFTERS contacts. For a complete list, check our website (*www.firstthings.com*).

In Lawrence/Kansas City, Kansas contact:
Robert J. Bingaman
e-mail: *mail@robertjosiah.com*

On the Eastern Shore of Maryland:
Jim Duncan
26268 Tunis Mills Road
Easton, Maryland 21601
Phone: (410) 215-6008
e-mail: *Jim.Duncan@navtrak.net*

In Charlottesville or Barboursville, Virginia:
David C. Springman
3875 Gilbert Station Road
Barboursville, Virginia 22923
Phone: (434) 975-6248
e-mail: *dcarlspring@ntelos.net*

In Pasadena, California:
Ralph D. Winter
President
William Carey International University
1469 Bresee Avenue
Pasadena, California 91104
e-mail: *rdw112233@aol.com*

In the Sarasota/Bradenton area of Florida:
Maureen and Terry Aldrich
7821 Alhambra Drive
Bradenton, Florida 34209
Phone (941) 795-1212
e-mail: *aldrich123@verizon.net*

In Miami/Dade, Florida:
Jesse M. Rodriguez
660 Warren Lane
Key Biscayne, Florida 33149
Phone: (786) 348-6363
e-mail: *jesserodriguez00@yahoo.com*

In and around Lexington, Kentucky:
Charles Walsh
403 East Margaret Drive
Wilmore, Kentucky 40390
Phone: (859) 223-2180 or (859) 858-9582
e-mail: *cwalsh@lexingtonchristian.org*

■ We will be happy to send a sample issue of this journal to people who you think are likely subscribers. Please send names and addresses to First Things, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, New York 10010 (or e-mail to subscriberservices@pma-inc.net). On the other hand, if they're ready to subscribe, call toll free 1-877-905-9920, or visit *www.firstthings.com*.

Sources: Lesbian custody battle, *Seattle Times*, May 6, 2004. Paul Ehrlich as the reverse Cassandra, Richard Bailey, *Wall Street Journal*, May 20, 2004. Albanian Muslims slaughter Orthodox Christians, *Christian Science Monitor*, May 20, 2004. Laurie Goodstein interview with RJN on Evangelical culture, *New York Times*, May 29, 2004. Lutheran Church in Kenya, Letters of Obare and Hammar, plus *Kyrkans Tidning*, April 22, 2004. "Emerging Church," *Nicotine Theological Journal*, April 2004. Reply to Caldwell on Vatican II, *New York Times Book Review*, May 2, 2004. Pilfering Pentecostal, *Forum Letter*, June, 2004. NEA under Dana Gioia, *New York Times*, February 13, 2004. Prejudiced reviewer, *Publisher's Weekly*, April 12, 2004. Alan Wolfe on a small, sectarian journal, *New Republic*, April 12, 2004.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Do Christians belong in the ivory tower and the corridors of power?

We believe they do.

THE HARVEY FELLOWS PROGRAM

THE HARVEY FELLOWS PROGRAM seeks applications from Christians engaging in graduate study at premier universities. The Harvey Fellowship is designed to recognize, encourage, and support Christians who aspire to leadership in strategic realms of society.

If you are a committed Christian pursuing a graduate degree at a top institution and you will be entering a field that is underrepresented by Christians, such as law, business, government, fine arts, or academia, we want to hear from you. In the biblical tradition of figures such as Joseph and Daniel, we hope to encourage faithful Christians to pursue positions of influence. Believing in the Lordship of Christ over all of creation, the Harvey Fellowship is motivated by the cultural mandate to redeem the structures that shape society, as well as the people in it.

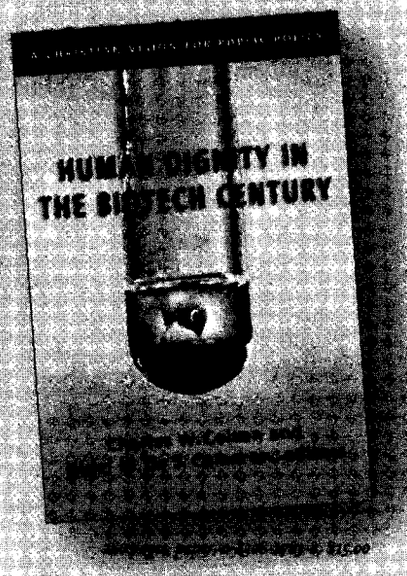
Harvey Fellows receive a stipend of $15,000, which is awarded on the basis of merit and is renewable for up to a total of three years. Generally, only students studying at a program considered to be among the "top five" in its particular field will be considered.

Applications will be accepted from August 1 to November 1, 2004. The Harvey Fellowship is an initiative of the Mustard Seed Foundation. For more information or to receive an application, please see our website or contact us:

MUSTARD SEED FOUNDATION
3330 Washington Blvd., Suite 100 ~ Arlington, Virginia 22201
(703) 524-5620 ~ *www.msfdn.org*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SCIENCE & FAITH



HUMAN DIGNITY IN THE BIOTECH CENTURY

A Christian Vision for Public Policy

CHARLES W. COLSON AND NIGEL M. DE S. CAMERON, EDITORS

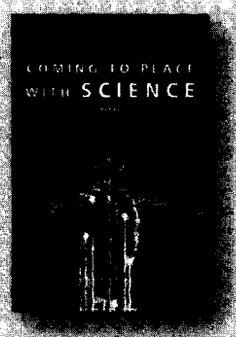
The contributors to this book argue that the greatest debates of this new century concerning ethics and public policy will surround the issue of biotechnology. These twelve essays alert the reader to the ethical and legal challenges we face in the new genetics, involving embryo research, stem cell research, cloning, genetic engineering, gene therapy, pharmacogenomics, cybernetics, nanotechnology and, of course, abortion. Leaders in their fields, these contributors point out the crucial role Christians can and should play in the public square. The forward-looking thought by these spokespersons will help us get prepared.

CHARLES W. COLSON is the founder of Prison Fellowship and chairman of the Wilberforce Forum.

NIGEL M. DE S. CAMERON is Research Professor of Bioethics at Chicago-Kent College of Law and the President of the Institute on Biotechnology and the Human Future.

COMING TO PEACE WITH SCIENCE

Bridging the Worlds Between Faith and Biology



Is a thoroughly Christian doctrine of creation compatible with widely held conclusions of modern science, especially biology?

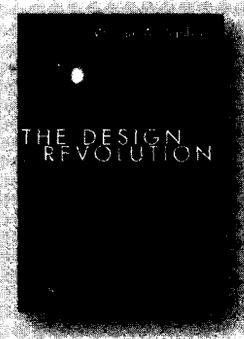
Darrel R. Falk brings together his biblically based understanding of creation and the most current research in biology. The result of his efforts is a new paradigm for relating the claims of science to the truths of Christianity.

DARREL R. FALK is professor of biology and associate provost for research at Point Loma Nazarene University in Point Loma, California.

235 pages, paper, 0-8308-2742-0, $17.00

THE DESIGN REVOLUTION

Answering the Toughest Questions About Intelligent Design



"Dembski, a philosopher/mathematician who has been an important theorist for the intelligent design movement, handles a wide range of questions and objections that should give both fans and detractors of ID plenty to chew on."
PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

WILLIAM A. DEMBSKI is associate research professor in the conceptual foundations of science at Baylor University and a senior fellow of the Discovery Institute's Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture.

334 pages, cloth, 0-8308-2375-1, $22.00

IVP InterVarsity Press (630) 734-4321 www.ivpress.com Available in bookstores

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED